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# The Art of JOHN BYRNE

volume one

# THE ART OF JOHN BYRNE or

# «Out of My Head»

**The Art of John Byrne**
Volume One - 1980
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# FOREWORD
## "JUST OFF THE TOP OF MY HEAD" By Roger Stern

People often ask me what John Byrne is really like.

I usually reply that John is one of the most talented individuals I know. For one thing, he is the only member of my generation who can do a recognizable impression of Sir Winston Churchill. At least, he's the only one I know of.

Of course, John is capable of much more than mere vocal mimicry of former British Prime Ministers. He is also an eclectic song stylist (surely, there is no better way to refer to a man who can sing every verse of, "I'm Walking Backwards for Christmas Across the Irish Sea"), a connoisseur of obscure curses, and a seeker of the perfect hat.

Incredibly, most people care very little about these intriguing personal facts. For some odd reason, they would rather hear about these silly little drawings that John has been supporting himself with for the past five years.

There's just no accounting for tastes.

I mean, I'll grant you that this Byrne character can draw pretty well, but he's no Leonardo da Vinci. Unlike Leonardo, John hasn't been dead for over four hundred years. And as to the matter of speed...well! Old Lenny barely squeaked out twelve paintings during his entire life, whereas Mr. Byrne has been known to turn out forty to fifty pages of art a month. But then, da Vinci never had a chance to grow up with comic books.

Luckily, at least for the purposes of those of us connected with this portfolio, John did grow up with comics. In his early, formative years as a wee British waif, he first learned of the fanciful world of super-beings through a series of hardcover black-and-white reprints of such notables as Superboy and Rex the Wonder Dog. But those precious, early books only whetted the comics appetite of the blond-haired boy from West Bromwich, England. That appetite was satisfied only when he became a youthful Canadian frontiersman, hale and hearty -- and sneaky -- enough to acquire the actual American four-color process comics over the objections of his well-meaning mother. In other words, John was just another of the million or so kids who became hooked on comics -- despite the best efforts of Estes Kefauvelr, the P.T.A., and all those who wished to uphold the good, the right, and the dull.

So, you take that love of comics, you add a large dose of television, movies, and science fiction...you mix in an unquestionable talent for drawing, pour in one beard, and let rise for about twenty years...and voila! There's your basic John Byrne.

Did I mention that he can write, too? No?

Well John can write comics, as well as draw them. And, speaking as someone who does that sort of thing for a living, he's not bad. Oh, sure, he can't spell worth a damn -- and he's one of the worst typists you'll ever run into -- but the end product reads very well. This guy can even letter, albeit with a slight accent, but what do you expect from someone who grew up in a Commonwealth nation?

Coloring? Forget it...the man is colorblind! When John picked up the **IRON FIST** strip from Marvel Comics, he drew the first four stories under the mistaken impression that the character wore a brown costume.

(At this point, there are undoubtedly a few ultra-sharp collectors out there who figure that they've caught me in the midst of a falsehood. I can hear them now: "If John Byrne is colorblind, how could he have painted those comics covers for Charlton a few years ago? And we've seen color sketches that Byrne has drawn, too! Is **that** the work of a colorblind man?" Well, the answer is yes! It's the work of a crafty colorblind man. You see, John uses color marking pens for his color illustrations, and those color markers have the name of the color carefully stamped on each one. Just think, you could sneak into John's home, change the labels on his markers, and make him look like a complete fool. Isn't that embarrassing?)

So, what else is there to say about John Byrne?

Well, he loves to engage in visual tomfoolery...like, say, drawing friends or family members into stories. John's father has made at least four appearances in as many stories -- he was, for example, Dean Beatty in **MARVEL TEAM-UP** #65 -- and I've lost track of how many times I've discovered myself lurking in the back of a crowd scene or plastered across a wanted poster in a Byrne-drawn book. The ultimate "guest appearance" story was a recent two-part **X-MEN** yarn set in John's old home stomping grounds of Calgary, Alberta. Virtually every innocent bystander depicted was a friend of John's.

There, the secret's out -- John Byrne draws from life! (I wonder who he used as the model when he did that Man-Thing **TEAM-UP** story? Hmm...)

(Oh, out of fairness -- and the spirit of giving credit where credit is due -- it should be noted that in the pages of **X-MEN**, there are often a few visual gags thrown in by inker Terry Austin as well. That's why you'll sometimes find Popeye or the Phantom Stranger lurking n the background.)

Be that as it may, there's not a whole lot more to tell about this Byrne character. Basically, he's a pretty dull guy. He's hardly what you'd call a physical fitness buff, tending more towards a sedentary lifestyle. He'd rather sit at home and watch an old rerun of **Longstreet** than go out for a wild night on the town. He likes books by Larry Niven, movies by John Frankenheimer, and cake by Sara Lee (nobody doesn't like Sara Lee) -- and he's a firm adherent to William Claude Dunkinfield's dictum about dogs and small children.

Other than that, there's nothing more to be said about John Byrne...aside from the fact that he's one of the best artists presently working in comics. And there are few people with whom I would rather work.

That's all.

# JOHN BYRNE: THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE MUGWUMP

## AN EXTREMELY PERSONAL PROFILE BY TERRY AUSTIN

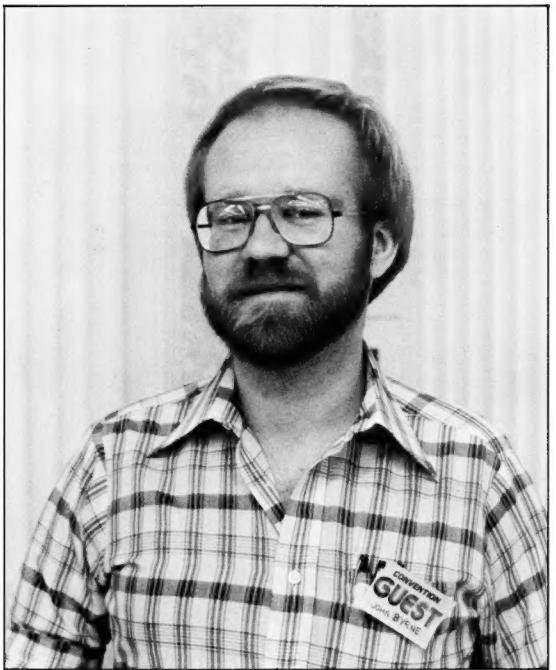
John Byrne...what can I say about this man that hasn't been said before? Well, I could say that he is the largest exporter to the USA of chocolate-covered maple leaves; that his hobby is knitting potholders for orphans to play with; that he wears nothing but a Winnie the Pooh pillowcase when he works (before you ask, over his head); that hs is the only man living who can spell the word "NEANDERTHAL" while being hit on the head with a cardboard box full of kitchen utensils and listening to Chris Claremont describe the plot of the next 50 issues of the X-Men; that he carries in his back pocket the flattened carcass of a muskrat he once ran over on the highway between Calgary and Edmunton in the hope of one day seriously confusing a pickpocket; that he can juggle Roger Stern with one hand while whistling the theme song from the Merry Marvel Marching Society; that he is a tragic victim of Double Jepordyaphobia (an all-consuming fear of Art Fleming); that he lives in a straw hut in the jungles of Peru surrounded by natives who regularly make sacrifices to his electric pencil sharpener.

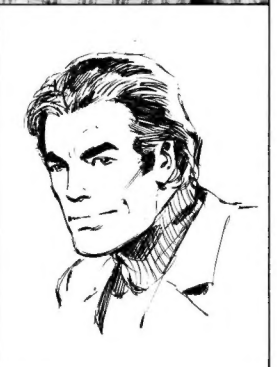
Yes, come to think of it, I could say all those things and more, but they would be lies and my mommy wouldn't like that.

Let me say instead that John Byrne is a terribly nice chap who draws pretty pictures, and the greatest compliment that I can pay the guy is to say that although I've inked more of his pages than anyone else, I'm not bored yet...John, yer the best.

# INTERVIEW

**First of all, when were you born?**
July 6, 1950
**And where?**
Walsall, England
**And when did you move to Canada?**
When I was around eight years old.
**Where did you go to high school?**
In Canada, in my home town of Calgary.
**And College?**
Also in Calgary. The Alberta College of Art...reputed to be one of the best in the world.
**What was your first fanzine work?**
The very first I can remember, outside of some Canadian stuff for a thing called **Epoch**, I think it was **#5**...I did a lot of work for them, and then for **Chronicle**, and then for **CPL**, which was sort of a "jumping off", since most of us turned pro.
**What does CPL stand for?**
**Contemporary Pictorial Literature.** It was done by Bob Layton and Roger Stern.
**What year was that?**
Well, that was just as I was in the process of turning pro, so I guess it was 73 or 74.
**Your first professional work was for Charleton?**
The very first was...ah actually, technically, my very first professional sale was to Marvel. It was an eight page story that eventually ran in **Giant-Sized Dracula #5.** It was inked by Rudy Nebres, and that predated my first sale to Charleton by a couple of days.
**What was the story about?**
It was called "Dark Asylum". It was a little eight page horror story. Tony Isabella wrote it. And the first "Rog 2000" story in **E-Man** was the first story to Charleton. That was written by Nick Cuti.
**You had also done some work for the Charleton Bullseye.**
Yes, that came later. **Bullseye** was put out by Bob Layton and Roger Stern. It was kind of an outgrowth of **CPL.**
**Was it under Charleton's supervision?**
Well, it wasn't a house organ, like **Foom** or **Amazing World of DC.** It was put out by Charleton fans, with Charleton's best wishes, and didn't dictate what went into the book.
**I remember there was a Neal Adams poster, based on one of the stories you had done for Bullseye.**
Yes, that was the Adams "Doomsday Plus One" Poster. Supposedly, its the only Charleton stuff they say he's done, only I think he's done **Atomic Mouse**, which was Charleton.
**When did you officially start for Marvel?**
My **official** first assignment for Marvel was **Iron Fist**, which I did in **Marvel Premier #15**, the last **Premier** appearance of **Iron Fist.**
And that was from Chris Claremont saying, "Give this guy work, he's good!" And Pat Broderick being terminally late I guess.
**So it went from Gil Kane and Roy Thomas to Pat...**
Oh God, it went through a lot of people between Gil and myself. There was Gil, Larry Hama, Arvell Jones, Pat Broderick...probably a lot of others in there.





It finally came to me, and they (Marvel) said, "If we like what you do, you can either have **Iron Fist** when he gets his own book, or we'll give you other work."

**Were you involved with the plot of Iron Fist?**

Towards the end, I was involved more.

**How did the Misty Knight Affair start?**

The Misty Knight thing started...she was created by Tony Isabella almost as a throw-away character in one of the Arvell Jones issues. Chris brought her back as Coleen Wing's partner in **Night Wing Inc.** And then we sort of had to choose which one is going to be the girl friend, Coleen or Misty? I pushed for Misty, and Chris went along with it.

**Then you started up with the Champions?**

I guess the **Champions** was my first group book. I went to Marvel, to the offices where occasionally Archie Goodwin was Editor-in-Chief, and I asked for another book. He said, "Do you want the **Champions?**" and I said, "Sure, why not?" "I can't get the **X-Men**, so I'll take the **Champions**". I remember I was talking to Bob Hall at a convention the next day, and he asked me what I was doing now? I said I was doing the **Champions**, and he said, "Oh...I thought I was doing the **Champions.**" I guess it was the first time he found out he wasn't doing it anymore, which kind of made me feel bad. I don't think that the **Champions** was the second thing I had done. **Daredevil** and **Ghost Rider** might have been before that.

**I wasn't aware you had done those books.**

I did a **Daredevil** and a **Ghost Rider**, one of each, which was a cross over, and I was supposed to get **Daredevil** as a result of that, but I didn't. It worked out for the best.

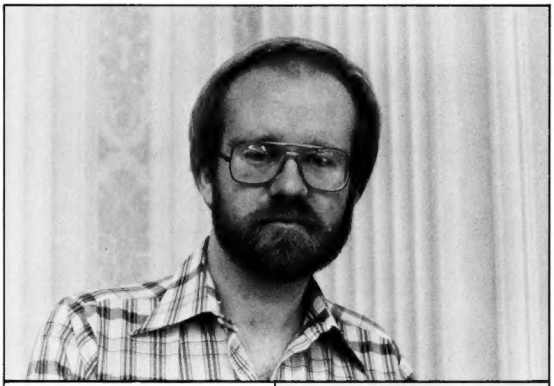
**Getting back to the Champions, did you have much involvement with that book?**

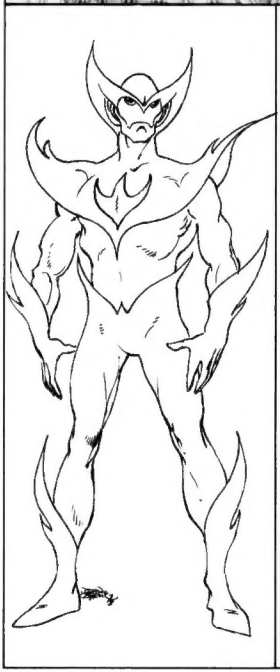
Well I come into it at issue #11, so that the trend of the book had been established. Bill Mantlo and I had tried to turn it around and make it something that would work. I only had a lot of input on one story, which was more in terms of trying to get other than what Bill had done. Beyond that, since I was only on it for about 5 or 6 issues, not counting the one issue that I inked, I really found myself not only **not** putting in any input, but not even wanting to. I found myself on the book, and found I couldn't get into it.

**Now to something you obviously can get into - The X-Men. Were you a fan from the beginning of the book?**

**OH YES!** Big Dave Cockrum fan, as I said in the letter that appeared in my first issue of the **X-Men.** I said how difficult it would be to follow Dave, since I was a fan of his.

**He did a fine job on the book.**
He did a **bang-up** job on the book!
**How much control do you have on the X-Men?**
Oh, a lot! When I first took over the book, they (Dave Cockrum and Chris Claremont), were just finishing up Xavier's dream thing, so I had nothing to do with that. However, from that moment on, I started to get more and more control, to the extent (although its been forgotten for the last few issues, and I've told them off about this), I have been getting co-plotter credit. We've been thinking about changing the credits, so it reads, "Chris Claremont-John Byrne, authors", so that people will realize that I am contributing at least 50%, some times more, sometimes less.
**What about Alpha-Flight?**
That was all mine.
**Could you go into a bit of pre-history about the Alpha-Flight?**
Oh Lord. Well...**Vindicator** was the "**Captain America**" type character. He appeared first in **X-Men** #109, but he goes back to my pre-fandom days, when I was still at the College of Art. I designed the first incarnation of **Vindicator,** who was then called "**The Sentinel**", who became "**The Guardian**" who became "**The Centurion**" who then went into limbo for a while.
**Was the costume idea always the same?**
When the costume was originally created, it was very much what Richard Conally came up with for Captain Cunuck. So I tried at first doing a variation on my original costume and realized that no matter what I did, nobody would realize I was doing a variation on **my** original costume. They would assume it was a variation on Captain Cunuck. So I went totally away, forgot everything I had ever done with it, and came up with the wrap-around flag image. So he was the first of the Alpha-Flight. Then we were left to come up with five others, all of which were mine, and so I sat down and said, "I want them to be regional Canadians, without being **Captain America** types. So I came up with Sasquatch, who was the Canadian **Hulk,** obviously. That was an easy name, the Big Foot image, since that's what they call him.
**What are the origins of the group's powers?**
**Vindicator's** powers come from his suit. He built the thing, and it gives localized control of the electro-magnetic field of the earth, sort of like an artificial Magneto.
**Sasquatch's** powers are gamma induced, like the Hulk, only he did it deliberately under a controlled situation, which is why he is still fully in command when he is **Sasquatch. Aurora** and **Northstar,** the twins,





the French characters, are mutants. **Snowbird**, the shape-changer...her power is from...well, originally in my mind, got her power from **Nelvana**, an Eskimo goddess character from the **Canadian Whites**, which were the Canadian comics of the 1940's. We'll probably never say that, unless we find out there really was a goodess named **Nelvana**, but that's who I figure she got her powers from. **Shaman**, the Indian character, his powers are witchcraft, since he is a witch doctor, an Indian Shaman.

**The two stories in the X-Men were fantastic, I'm sure the response was very good from the fans.**

Well, we're getting some good stuff on it. Chris, unfortunately, has been printing the Canadian letters for some reason. I'd like to see the American response.

**Do you think there'll ever be an Alpha-Flight book?**

Well, Stern and I are talking about a two-part premier. The weird thing is, the two-part story we did in **X-Men**, and the Canadian story we did in **Iron Fist** both took place in the middle of the winter. So I said, "Let's do a Canadian story that doesn't take place in the winter, so people can see that there's not snow up there all the time!" The only thing I could come up with is a story that takes place at the magnetic North Pole, which is in Canada. So there'll be snow everywhere anyway, even though it does take place in the summer.

**Getting back to the X-Men, how do you see the progression of the book?**

Well, Chris and I are "plotted" more or less through July-August, 1981. We know the **major** directions of the characters, we know the major things that are going to be happening. We know, for example, what we have taken to call "The Trauma Issue" that's coming up in about five or six issues for **me**, so its like eight issues for what's on the stands right now. After the "Trauma" issue, the **X-Men** are going to break up...we know that. There are going to be half a dozen solo stories part and parcel of what we're setting up now. Xavier is going to start a second team, literally **the second team**, after the first team of **X-Men**, of young kids who will be wearing the original **X-Men** black and yellow costumes. The first one of these kids has already been introduced in one of the stories I'm working on, 129 and 130. She will turn up as we see it now, just in time to walk in after all the **X-Men** have left, because they've split up. Then of course they'll get back together again, with the second team there as well. We'll probably have the little black kid from **Fantastic Four #203**, who created the

dopplegangers of the **F.F.** Since the girl we're introducing is named **Ariel,** which is a character from Shakespeare's "Tempest", someone suggested we ought to have a Caliban to balance her, which I thought was a nice idea. We are going to develop the relationships between other members of the **X-Men** like Wolverine and his Japanese girlfriend, and where that is going to go. We're going to do a story which will introduce Wolverine's father, who's already appeared in the Marvel universe, and things like that, so we know where we're going, pretty solid. Its how long its going to take that's the question.

**What exactly will Ariel's powers be?**

Well, Ariel's powers "sound" like the Vision, they don't **look** like the **Vision's**, but sound like them. She walks through walls. She does it by cancelling the valences between atoms, so that she doesn't become transparent, she just literally passes through the wall. And that power also gives her the ability to "run up the air" if she has to. It's almost like flying, except it's a very limited thing. She could run from the ground to the roof of a building. And it also gives her the ability to scramble electrical machinery, if she sticks her hand inside it. We think she might be able to break ropes, if she held the rope, and used her power, the rope would come apart. Little things like that. We're thinking in terms of possibly, if she were able to roll herself up in a ball, while she was inside a wall, then somebody as small as say, Nightcrawler would be able to jump through her, as if it was an opening, which you couldn't do with the Vision

**And the other members of the new X-Men?**

They're still nebulous. As I say, we'll probably be bringing in the little black kid.

**He looked quite powerful on his own in the Fantastic Four.**

It's a case with him of figuring out how exactly that power functions and what you would do with it. If you've got a character that can create a team, you don't **need** a team. It's the Madrox problem

**In the Star Jammers issue of the X-Men, we discovered that Corsiar was Scott Summer's father. Could you give us a little more detail into that.**

The thing is, as Chris has it set up, is that supposedly Scott and Kate Summers were flying along in their private plane. Scott being a Major in the Air Force, and this UFO came down and grabbed them, only before they could be spirited away, Kate Summers, the mother, grabbed Alex and Scott and strapped them to a parachute and threw them out of the plane, which is

why Scott grew up in an orphanage. He believes his parents to be dead. His mother **is** dead...she was killed. His father is Corsair of the Star Jammers. Neither of them know. I guess Corsair knows now that Scott is his son. But Scott has not made the connection. All the clues are there for him to do it, but its not the sort of thing you figure out. If you met someone scooting around in outer space who happens to call you Scott, your first impression wouldn't be, "This is my dad!" So whether that will ever be resolved, I don't know. It probably won't be resolved in the **X-Men.**

**Did the UFO have anything to do with Scott and Alex's powers?**

No, not at all. Obviously, something happened to either Major Summers or his wife that caused a permanent "kink" in their genes. We kid about it, what with Scott who has the eye beams, and Alex who has the blasts coming out in all directions...we say there was a third Summers who hit puberty and exploded (laughter).

**What seems to be the story with Jean Grey?**

Well, the "Trauma" issue involves Jean, so I can't really go into it. But we are going to resolve the "**Phoenix**" question once and for all.

**At one time, there was talk of you doing a "What If?" book that wondered what would happen if Magneto had formed the X-Men. Could you give us that story?**

The basic premise was that Charles Xavier had faced Lucifer, and the dead bolt fell on him - the thing that crippled him. Only this time it killed him, so there was never a Charles Xavier. It was Magneto who formed together the first band of **X-Men**, which were not called the **X-Men**, they were the **Brotherhood of Evil Mutants.** They were Cyclops, Angel, Iceman, Marvel Girl, Beast, Scarlet Witch, and Quicksilver, with somewhat different names. Cyclops was still Cyclops, the Angel was the Arch Angel, and carries a flaming sword. Iceman had a different name, I can't remember it right now. Marvel Girl became Psyke. Beast was still the Beast, and obviously Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch still had the same names. The story was essentially, that with **that** particular team forming the **Brotherhood of Evil Mutants,** Magneto beats everyone. He destroys the **Avengers,** and the **Fantastic Four,** in their earliest stages. In order to destroy the **Fantastic Four,** they team up with Doctor Doom. Doctor Doom then turns on them (this is an earlier form of Doctor Doom, the one of about issue #10 of the F.F.). He turns on them and Magneto magnetically, simply crushes the Doctor's

chest plate (laughter) "So much for you fella!" Then, all the other super heroes are either imprisoned or destroyed. Those who are not killed are imprisoned on Asteroid M, and Magneto rules the world! We show that its not all that bad a place, really. Homo Sapiens are not the top dogs anymore - the world is ruled by Homo Superior. And everything is going along real cool and neat, until one day, along comes the Silver Surfer, followed immediately by Galactus

**Uh-oh**

And in this case, since the Thing was killed in the destruction of the Fantastic Four, there is no Alicia to soften the heart of the Surfer, so the Surfer doesn't turn on Galactus, so Galactus eats the world

**Whew! Nice ending!**

Of course, Asteroid M with all these superheroes on it, which is in orbit, goes drifting off into space, with Spider-Man, and Daredevil, and all the other survivors.

**That's a marvelous story! Will it ever see print?**

I hope so. If Chris and I could get around to it, it would make a great annual.

**Did you put that story together with Chris Claremont?**

Yes, Chris and I together came up with it.

**Speaking of Chris, is he your favorite writer to work with?**

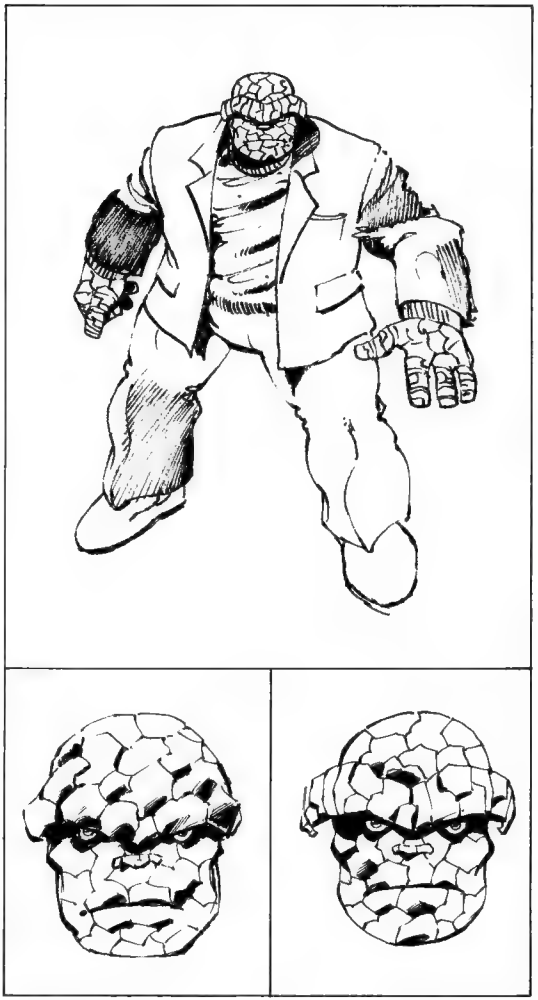
Chris is one of the easiest to work with. I like what Chris is doing, and he pretty much goes along with the things that I want to do. You know...I give him little concessions (laughter) here and there. It's only right...he thinks he writes the book (laughter). Its fun working with Chris We both have similar ideas on where the book is going

**As to your own writing talents, Marvel Two-In-One #50 stands out as one of the best Ben Grimm stories to ever be written. What were your feelings about the story?**

That was a lot of fun It was a book I've wanted to do ever since the concept of the Thing actually having changed, was first introduced way back in #130 of the Fantastic Four, or somewhere like that, when Roy Thomas took over the book, and introduced the idea that the Thing had actually, physically changed. It wasn't just a different artist. So, I thought there's got to be a fight there somewhere.

**The way you mimicked Kirby pulled the whole story together.**

That's what I was trying for. A very sparse, minimal background, lots of big figures, and standard variations on a six-panel format. And I guess Joe Sinnot had a ball inking it, "Boy I wish the Thing still looked



like that, that was fun!"

**I think everyone tended to forget how ugly the Thing used to be.**

We got a good amount of letters on it too. People saying how they had forgotten how bitter and angry the Thing used to be.

**As did the Thing himself.**

Yes, and in one particular letter, I think it was one that was printed, one fellow even found himself thinking of the old Thing as a villian in the context with the new Thing.

**As far as inkers go, who do you think does your pencils justice?**

Well so far, the one inker who's come the closest to looking finished, as it looks in my head, was Tony DeZuniga on the one **Team-Up**, which is not to put anybody else down. Its just that when that book came out, it looked as it had looked in my head . . . my pencils don't look as they look in my head, but that book looked like what was in my head. Beyond that little flash in the pan, obviously Terry Austin is superb. He does a couple of things I don't like . . . little things with zip-a-tone occasionally, but they're so trivial as to be hardly worth mentioning. I wanted to get Tom Palmer, but I'd probably bitch if I had him though. Beyond that, I like Dan Green very much on the **Avengers** and **Iron Fist.** A lot of it looks as it would look if I inked it myself, if I was as competent as I would like to be.

**What's an average day like for John Byrne?**

I get up around 8:00, and start work around 9:00. I work through until about 12:30, then take a half hour for lunch, and then work from 1.00 to 3:00, so its something like six hours a day

**You feel you get more accomplished with such regimented hours?**

Oh yes, I have to be, otherwise I'd find myself working all kinds of strange hours.

**You'd suggest that to anyone getting into the business?**

**Anyone!** You've got to develop the equivilent of a nine to five. I work a nine to three, with a half hour for lunch, and in that time, depending on the book, I do three pages of full pencils, or five pages of breakdowns.

**Speaking of the books, whose idea was it to take on three books a month? (X-Men, Fantastic Four, and the Avengers)**

Mine! I simply took on as much work as I thought I was capable of doing. I still think I'm capable of doing three books, but because of outside commitments, and things like that, my books were getting late. To give you an example, I was going to be a **week** late on my third issue of **Iron Fist**, and I phoned Marvel, and I asked if I could have a fill-in. I talked to John Verporten, and he practically had a heart-attack laughing at the concept of having a fill-in on a book that was only a week late. I didn't realize how crazy that was until I took over the **X-Men**, which was four months late when I picked it up. The **X-Men** I just did was about two weeks late. I dropped the **Avengers** as you know temporarily, or maybe forever. I figure some time in the new year, I may ask for a third book

**You seem to show a special attention to certain characters in your books, like the Wolverine in the X-Men, the Thing in the Fantastic Four, and the Beast in the Avengers. Do these characters hold something special for you?**

Yes, well actually, my special interest character for the **Avengers** is the Scarlet Witch. But, in any given book, I will pick out a character, and say, "This is the character I'm going to make mine!" And since Nightcrawler was so obviously Dave Cockrum's character right from the word go,

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I decided to make mine Wolverine Largely because he's a Canadian, and largely because he's a homicidal maniac (Laughter) and that's an unusual concept. The Thing is so obviously **the** star of the **Fantastic Four,** it was almost really no choice.

**But you seem to give him such a sense of "Humanity"**

This is something I called up Sinnot as soon as I got the book. To me, the ultimate Thing story was **"This Man, this Monster,"** with the splash page of him standing in the rain . . . that's the Thing! And I said to Joe, "Correct my Thing as much as you like, but slowly stop doing it, because I'm going to gradually crank it back to **that** Thing." I want to get across the feeling that there's a man in there! He's not a big orange teddy bear, as much as I respect John Buscema, he turned him into a big orange teddy bear. I want to get the feeling that inside, somehow, almost as if he's locked in a suit that he can't get out of, there is a man. I'm doing it by making his eyes look more human, and getting more human expressions on the face, and trying for more human musculature, without getting away from the Kirby . . .

**Rocks**

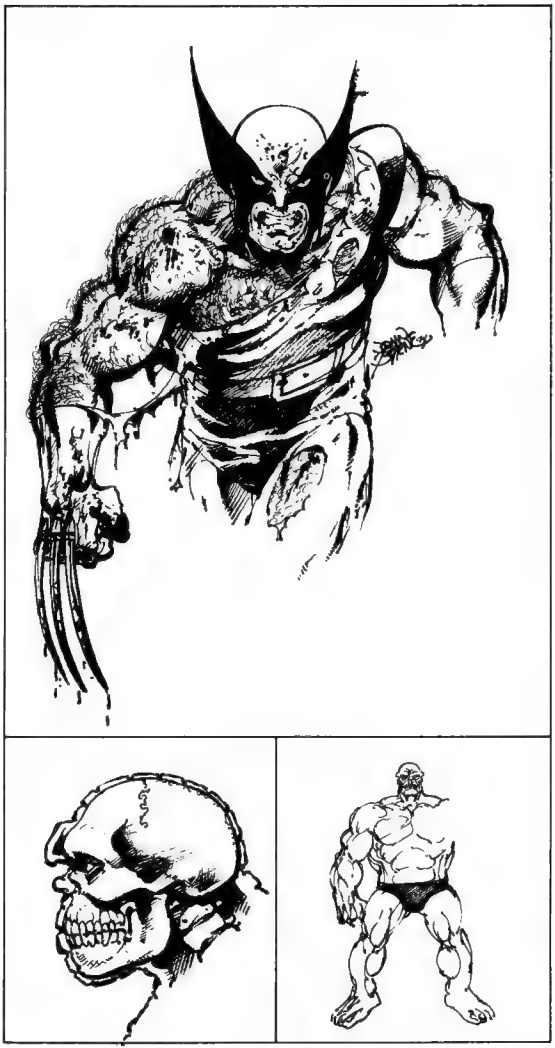
Rocks! And in the **Avengers,** I do love the Beast, I think he's great, although it took me a long time for some reason to make the psychological connection that this **was** Hank McCoy! Once I got that, I went, (snapping fingers) "Of course! This is the Beast! I know who this guy is!"

**There are some marked changes in the Beast. How do you see the two characters, old and new, especially in personality?**

Well, he deliberately changed his personality, if I remember the story, he deliberately sat down and said, "Well, I've been Sam Bookworm for so long, so now I'm going to make myself somebody else, now that I'm stuck being the Beast," and he completely changes his personality. Right now, if you read the stuff that's coming out, you'll notice a tendency to big words again. He's now a "Wild and Crazy Guy" who uses big words

**If it had been up to you, would you have made the change over from the old Hank McCoy to the new furry blue Beast?**

I didn't like it when they did it . . . I would not have done it, but I do like the Beast the way he is now. I would personally, rather that the Beast we have now be a different character I'd rather the two were two different people, and we still had the old Beast of the **X-Men,** who wore glasses and spoke in big words . . . maybe he's off



teaching college somewhere, but I like the Beast the way he is now. There was some talk when Jim Shooter took over the book, he was, as he said, "Give the Beast a hair job" and take off all the hair, but Archie Goodwin nixed it, so it didn't go through, and it was probably forgotten. I like the Beast the way he functions now.

**Things had been bad enough for Hank with the oversized hands and feet, but now, he's really removed from the rest of the world.**

Well, now he has totally abandoned Hank McCoy.

**And it seems he's doing very well with the ladies anyway.**

I believe Steve Englehart introduced that. There seems to be a lot of kinky ladies up at Marvel (Laughter). That's how the Nightcrawler came to be furry, because Paty, who is now Dave Cockrum's wife, like the concept of him being furry, so he became furry. I guess nobody thought it through at the time, but that gave us two bouncing, bubbly blue-furred mutants. In that context, we're switching Nightcrawler somewhat too. Nightcrawler is becoming less the swashbuckling character in **X-Men** #109. One of the first things I asked for when I took over the book, was for Nightcrawler to say, "Look, this is not all me! A lot of this is an act. A lot of this is how I face reality, cause I have to look in a mirror sometimes too!"

**Who's idea was it to get rid of the image-inducer?**

That was Chris', and a little bit mine, but mostly Chris'. There was a period in the **X-Men** where it was almost **Nightcrawler Comics - Co-starring the X-Men.** And it was a new power for Nightcrawler every issue, it seemed. We found the image inducer was becoming another power.

**He had used it against the Legion of Superheroes doppelgangers.**

He also used it against Black Tom and Juggernaut, when he pretended to be Xavier. The thing was, we didn't want Nightcrawler functioning in that fashion. Also, in **Giant-Sized X-Men #1**, he said life in the circus was not for him, he was going to face the world as he was, which made the image inducer a direct contradiction.

**And Nightcrawler's power to disappear in the darkness?**

That was something Dave threw in, and from what I hear, he's regretted it since, and I try to do it as little as possible. I use it only when I have to, and usually only when Chris asks for it. Mostly since I can't grasp how a character who is invisible in shadow, can have a face that's in shadow **all the time.** There's an inherit contradiction there, so I try and avoid it.

**How do you see the rest of the X-Men?**

Well, Scott is Mr. X-Men, he always will be. He's always the cornerstone member. He has no life really outside the **X-Men . . .** he's the dark, brooding character of the group. I've had a number of people give me costume designs for Scott. They hate Scott's costume, they say, "Give him this!", and its always bright yellow lightning bolts (Laughter), and I say, "That's totally wrong!". One of the things I've done myself, I didn't like the buckaneer boots Dave gave him. I thought they were far too flamboyant for the character. So, I have progressively narrowed them down. So slowly, in fact, that Chris just noticed it a couple of issues ago. He's now back in the boots that he was wearing when Adams was doing the book. So now the only thing that's changed is the visor, and that, I'm progressively shrinking too. It won't go back to the original visor, but it'll be getting down to something less spectacular, less

flamboyant. Nightcrawler we talked about. Wolverine, he's the little homicidal maniac. There's a tension between he and Scott, because he feels in many ways he would be a better leader than Scott.

**In one of the Mutant X books, we find out that Wolverine has Adamantium bones.**

Yes, we finally let the cat out of the bag.

**That sort of cuts down on the blood production doesn't it?**

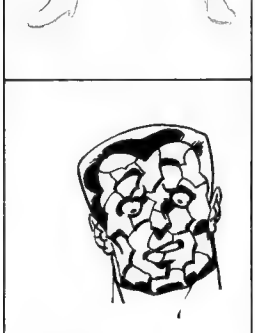
Well, a lot of people have come up with that, but a lot of people aren't thinking it through. The first power that we clearly established, although we didn't say it, we showed it, was that he heals almost instantly. Like when he was bitten by the dinosaur in the Savage Land, and he said "No problem, its gone (the wound)." He was punched into orbit, and survived it. So obviously, this guy's tough. You've got to figure that if this man's entire system, except for the bones, virtually instantly regenerates his red corpuscles don't wear out, and he doesn't need white corpuscles because he can't get infected or hurt in anyway. So thats the way its set up, the Canadian government surgically replaced all of his bones, with Adamantium casts. No scars 'cause it healed. There are one or two places that he is scarred, where we figure really intensive surgery, perhaps on joints or things, and an area had to be held apart so that it didn't heal properly. His skull and spinal column is re-enforced, since they couldn't be replaced.

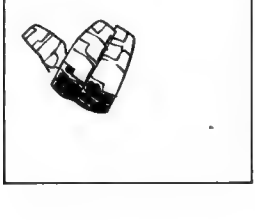
**And the claws?**

The claws retract into the hollow forearm, which is like a tube, and they can only come out when his hand is out in a straight line from the wrist, so they can come out the slots on the back of his hand.

**Speaking of Wolverine's claws, there was a particular thing you did in the very last issue of Iron Fist, when the X-Men guest starred. You had Wolverine pop his claws through Iron Fist's mask. It must have been your doing.**

That was a variation on something I always wanted to do if I got the book, or we did a black and white Wolverine story. The idea would be to have Wolverine put his fist flat





against somebody's chest, and then pop his claws, so they would go right through Another think I've wanted to do is get Wolverine in a position where his hands were flat back 90 degrees to his wrist, and be forced to pop the claws anyway, through the palms of his hands

**Ouch!**

That would be painful, but the minute he retracted the claws, it would heal

**Well, he looked a bit worried when Magneto threatened to pop Wolverine's claws into his own face.**

Yes, well for one thing, that would have come as a shock to him since Adamantium is non-magnetic. But Magneto, in his new boosted, "I'm at the peak of my strength" form, is not just dealing with metal anymore - he can control anything which generates an electro-magnetic field, which includes the human body. That's how he was able to zap the Beast, and throw him around, and manipulate Wolverine's claws. That was Chris' idea too. It was a beautiful move.

**Will the Banshee ever regain his powers?**

Banshee has lost his power, probably forever. He is retiring probably permanently, as of issue 129 to stay on Muir Island with Moira, after the affair with Mutant X. Moira needs him more now than the **X-Men** do. She comes out of it badly shaken, since out of that affair she loses her son and her husband simultaneously as the son possesses the body of the husband, so she looses the both at the same time.

**Ororo, how do you relate to her?**

I guess its no secret to anyone who's ever talked to me that I don't like Chris' origin for Storm. I much prefer Len Wein's version of the mysterious goddess character, that we don't know who or what she is. But in terms of what we've got for her, she's certainly one of the ones I enjoy drawing the most. We're going to be developing things, some of the things I can't talk about because it deals with "Trauma" issue. Basically, its characterizational stuff, you can't really play too much with her powers, they've been established. Maybe we can establish some limits to her powers. As I say, after the break-up issue, we'll be doing solo issues.

**What about Colossus?**

Colossus, right now, is going through a very bad head trip.

**Well, after all he went through in the Proletarian stories**

Yes, that tapped into a lot of things that were in his head. Although he is going to be the one who saves the day in the X story, he still doesn't feel comfortable anymore. Essentially, we're playing off the fact that we haven't done with him what Len wanted us to do. Len created Colossus to be the star of the group, like the Thing.

Obviously, he's not He's not even, well, he's probably on the bottom of the list, so we're playing off it. Here is this enormously powerful spectacular, visual character, and he doesn't really **do** anything, and he's thinking to himself (in a Russian accent) "What do I do? I stand around and do nothing!" So, after the break-up, he goes back to Russia, which was originally going to be a "Colosus quits and goes back to Russia" story. But since Banshee and Moira retired, and since we came up with the idea of the quitting thing, he'll go back to Russia, and get his head together, and come back to rejain the **X-Men**. Who are all coming back because of another "Foobaa" that's going on, and we'll bring 'em back together again . . . and they all fight Ultron.

**Really? About how many times has Ultron been taken apart, only to come back together again?**

The last number was Ultron 7 I believe. We stop numbering after that! That was so silly anyway, Ultron's the only villian you can tell exactly how many times he's been beaten before, because he tells you in his name

**He should get together with the Sentinels.**

There will be new Sentinels.

**AGAIN?**

They'll be different Sentinels. They'll be coming out of the Hellfire Club, which is a sequence that is beginning now The **X-Men** will trash the Hellfire Club, without realizing that the Hellfire Club is a legitimate organization. You "join the Hellfire Club" . . . its a nice thing to be in. Its only the inner circle that are the bad guys. One of the members of the Hellfire Club is Master Mind, and he will cloak everything so that when the X-Men come in swinging, people can't see that they're fighting bad guys, they just see them trashing this businessmen's club, of which, for example, Warren Worthington's father was a member. Since members of the Hellfire Club are high ranking doctors, lawyers, senators, congressmen, they will sit and say, "Well, these **X-Men** characters, they say they were good guys, and they just trashed this businessmen's club!". So there's going to be a sub-plot almost, of Sentinels, which will be man-sized. They will probably be built by someplace like Stark International, so these will not be putzy Sentinels.

**Stark International?**

Or Cross Technologies, or one of the biggies that we've got, to establish that these are not whimpo Sentinels, these are tough Sentinels. And the thing that we're not going to do of course, is this will not lead to a big X-Men - Sentinels battle issue. This will be like a constant menace, an anti-mutant police force. We'll be coordinating with the Avengers, so that the Beast and the Scarlet Witch are required to wear bleepers in their costumes, or something so that people know where they are at all times

**Big Brother comes to the X-Men.**
Yea, we're gonna keep mutants so that we know where they are! They've demonstrated that they are bad. Then of course, we'll clear them sooner or later, and then the Sentinels will go away. We'll be doing little stories with the **X-Men** chasing, say, Unus the Untouchable. They crash into where ever Unus is, "We're gonna trash him now! . . . and he's gone. There's a big hole in the wall, because the Sentinels got there first. It will be like that until we reveal that there are Sentinels out there.

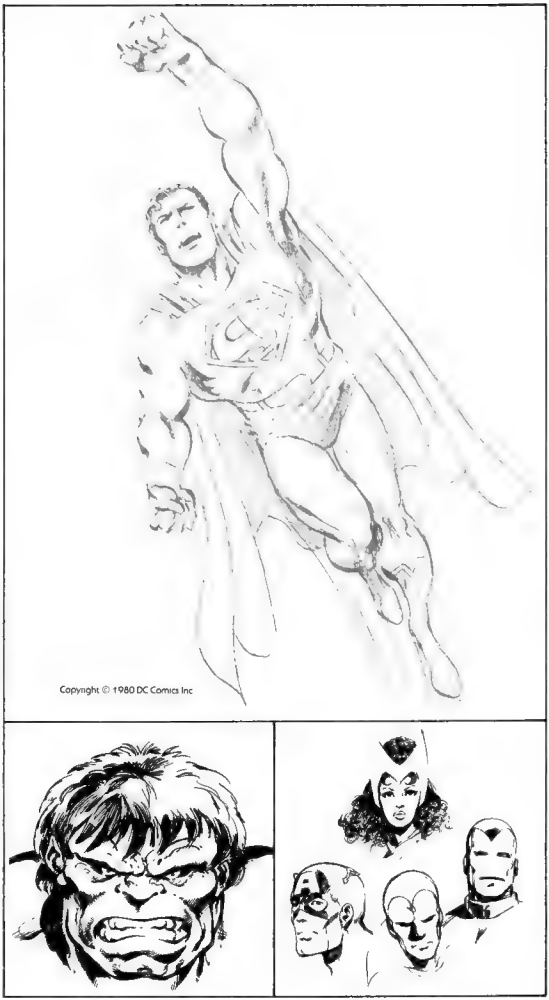
**Are they human in appearance?**
No, they'll look like Sentinels. They'll probably be one color, like a silver or a gold. This was inspired by the business I did in the **Hulk Annual**, having the Mastermold change size. And the idea of a Sentinel who can put on a trenchcoat and a flop hat and blend into a crowd.

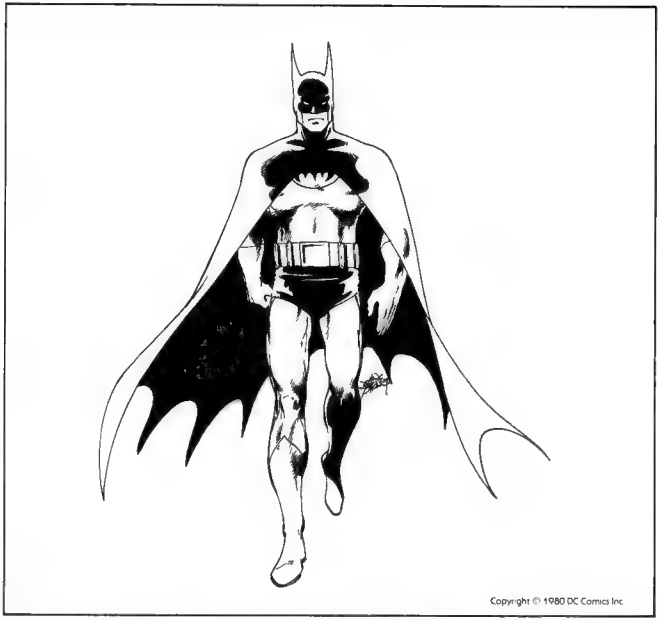
**That was a very good Hulk story. Would you like to do the Hulk more often?**
Yes, I'd like to do the Hulk. One would probably have to assassinate Sal Buscema at this point to do the Hulk. I wish you could have seen the pencils. Bob Layton softened them up a lot.

**It was interesting to see Warren Worthington by the pool, licking his wounds from the Defenders fiasco.**
He'll be coming back to the **X-Men** very soon.

**What about Bobby Drake?**
We have plans for Bobby . . . possible terminal plans for Bobby. According to Chris, he's off at business school. Warren finally said, "With this bozo hanging around, I might as well use him!" So we sent him off to business school to make him an accountant (Laughter).

**Of all the characters in both Marvel and DC, who is your favorite?**
Of all of them I would have to say Batman, with Superman a close second. They are the biggies. I saw the Superman movie 18 times. I would have seen it 18 times more, but it left. The thing that was weird, was sitting through it the first time, the way I felt . . . the only thing I could think of to equate to the first time I watched that movie was my first date. I felt the exact same way. I was nervous, I was trembling, I just sat there, saying, "Dear God, don't let it be a bomb!". I walked out of the movie the first time, and found myself emotionally drained. There were so many kickers in that thing that they seemed to set up deliberately to zap the fans. Lois does that "Can you read my mind?" thing, and he seems for a moment to react to it, but





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doesn't. "No, he can't! . . . oh, he can't . . thank God!" It reminded me of how it was reading the books. I think it was Marv Wolfman who said when he saw it, that it made him feel eight years old again, and so did I. That's Superman as I remember him, not as he is today

**And Batman?**

Well, Batman was the second super-hero I discovered, the first being Superman. I had picked up a comic, this is when I lived in England, that had Superman in it, and two other characters. One of which was Johnny Quick. The other was Batman. I asked, "Who is this Batman guy? He doesn't even have powers and he does all this neat stuff! I could even be the Batman!" Which I think is the appeal, since you can never be Superman, and no matter how many times you say, "Shazam" you can never be Captain Marvel. Batman and Superman have had a tremendous influence over me.

**Would you ever freelance for DC, and get in a little Batman or Superman?**

I may be. By the time this comes out, I'd be safe to say that there is a project I have told them I want. It's not definite, but they're doing a three-part mini-series, like the **World of Krypton,** called **"The Legend of Batman,"** and I said, "Hey, you guys want me over there, this is how you get me!" It'll be the life story of Batman. I just hope I don't freeze up. I do have an unfortunate tendency, there's a 12 year old fan who lives inside me.

**I think that's worked to everyone's advantage.**

Well, it's nice, but as I say, he comes out at the most inopportune times. The one time it hasn't happened to me was doing the Fantastic Four. I just whipped right into that book -- no problem at all! When I took over the **X-Men**, and started doing my first issue, it was stiff city! **Marvel Team-Up** I didn't have a problem with, because I never really thought of **Team-Up** as being the real Spider-Man, so it was no problem; it's just a guy, in a Spider-Man costume.

**How much involvement did you have with the Marvel Team-Ups?**

Oh, quite a bit. Chris and I would talk over the phone. The Red Sonja thing was entirely my idea. Chris gives me a 16 page plot for a 17 page story, but it's all motivation. Chris feels he has to get it on paper, so that he knows what he's talking about. Very little of a Chris Claremont plot is saying, "They do this..." It's more, "They do this because..." And then he leaves it up to me, especially in the **X-Men**. I would have to say that 50 to 60 percent of any issue is Chris'. 90 percent of the visual is mine: 90 percent of the characterization is Chris'. So if you look at something and say, "This is a characterizational bit," you'll know it's Chris. If you look at it and say, "It's a purely visual bit," you'll know it's mine.

**I've noticed in looking back at your early work, that your storytelling ability has really come along.**

Well, that's Jim Shooter dancing on my head, though I hate to admit it. There are many cases of people pointing out bad story telling that I still don't see as bad story

telling. For the most part I can see a maturity, and I can now see what he was talking about. For a long time, we had a problem with me not knowing what he meant when he said story telling. So I would do something, and he'd say, "Well, you did something right this issue," and I'd try to do it again next issue and lose it. But I have improved

**Your talent as an illustrator has also increased. Do you owe this to simply drawing all the time?**

I draw. I draw all the time. I'll quote John Buscema, "I draw all the time." You've seen my sketchbook, and they represent maybe a year and a half, two years tops. That's what I do all the time, if I haven't had a really rough day at the drawing board, and I'm just sitting there watching TV. I draw. I draw when I'm eating.

**I noticed there were quite a few Muppet sketches in your books. Are you a big fan of them?**

Oh yes, I've got a real thing for the Muppets. I tried out for the Muppets newspaper strip that's coming out. Marie Severin got it. I can see why, she's superb! I didn't regret getting the strip until I saw the movie, and then I went, "Darn!"

**Without getting too poetic, right now you are probably the biggest artist in the industry.**

I'm almost beginning to believe that.

**Well, believe it. With that, what do you see John Byrne doing in the next few years?**

John Byrne wants to do **Comics!**, for as long as there are comics.

**You have that big a love for the medium?**

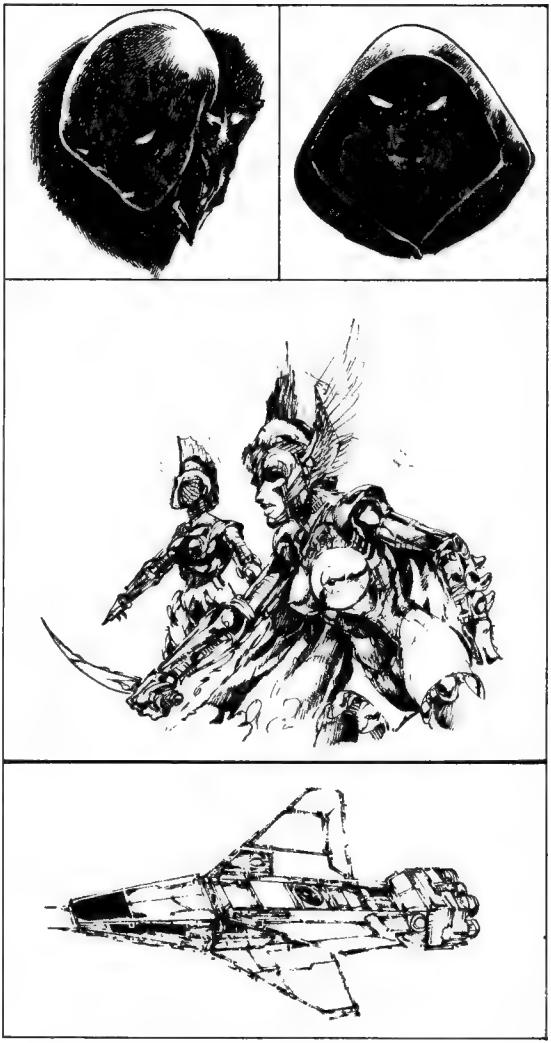
Unless something happens that really messes me up -- my "head space" (sixties word) (Laughter), relative to the comics themselves, I want to **be** Jack Kirby...I want to do it forever. Comics have kept me alive. I've had occasions of incredible depressions, when I think my life is going nowhere, I think I'll jump out the balcony, and then I think, no, I've got a deadline to meet. (Laughter)

**Okay, now for the standard interview question; what advice do you have for the young artist or writer that wants to get into the comics business?**

The one thing I tell everyone, is to avoid the mistake I made, which is to bottleneck. I channeled **everything** into becoming a "comic artist," specifically a "comic artist" and it was only a year or so ago that I realized that if comics do go away...WHAT DOES ONE DO?

**John Buscema could pick up a few jobs real quick.**

Yes, but I couldn't. So I have spent the



intervening year doing outside projects, expanding my style, and things like that. The one thing I say to anybody who asks, "How do you get in the business?" and I say, "That's easy, if you've got the talent, you get into the business, no problem...but don't plan for nothing else." If you're going to get into this business, make sure you can get into something else. Make sure you can dig ditches if necessary.

**As we're doing this interview, the 1979 Chicago Comic Convention has just come to a close. How are you dealing with the "Star" status that you're now receiving at conventions?**

This has been very strange. This is the first American con I've been to since November of 78, when it was just starting. The people were just starting to realize that something was happening with the **X-Men**. What I was convinced of was that something was happening with the X-Men. I've said all along, people are buying the **X-Men**, they're not buying Byrne. Well, I sat on the artist's panel yesterday, and they introduced the people sitting on the panel. They introduced Dick Giordano, and he got a large round of applause. They introduced Joe Kubert, who is like God to me, and he got a **large** round of applause. And then they introduced me...and the whole room went crazy! (Laughter) And I thought, "God! That's not coming at the **X-Men** that's coming at me!" They didn't say, "Here's the **X-Men!**" they said, "Here's John Byrne." Right now, I'm riding a very fine line between keeping a grasp on reality, or scooting up to Olympus, and saying, "Hey, look at me, I'm marvelous!"

**A lot of professionals run up there, and look real stupid on the way down.**

Yes, and it scares me. Being in Canada is a distinct advantage. I don't get it all the time

**So when you do get it, it's a nice lift.**

Yes, but I think if I was down here (America) I'd have a lot of trouble believing my own press.

**Yes, but you've got to remember, the guy in the supermarket just knows you as the guy who's buying the groceries.**

That's one of the humbling things. I could be the top name in comics. I could be God in comics, and I could walk up to Joe Blow in the street and say, "I'm John Byrne" and he'll go, "Huh?" And in fact, until very recently, I could walk up into the middle of a convention, and not be recognized. People didn't know what John Byrne looked like.

**You spoke of Joe Kubert before. Who if fact are your major influences?**

Neal Adams, Berni Wrightson, Jack Kirby, Joe Kubert, and Frank Bellemy, the British artist. Primarily them, in different ways. To some extent, Gil Kane too. It used to be nothing but Neal. My early stuff was the "poor man's" Neal Adams. The first job I had tried out for with Marvel was Captain America. He was going to come to Canada, so they thought it would be nice to have a Canadian artist do it. I sent in a couple of sample pages, and they showed it to Neal. I'm told Neal said, "It's very nice...what can **he** do?" (Laughter) Of course, now the reverse has happened. When I looked at that **Doomsday Plus One** poster that Neal did, I look at it and thought, "Well, this is pretty shitty for Neal!" but then I looked at it again and said, "No, it's very good **me**!" And I've noticed that Neal does that when he does someone **else's** character. When he does Sgt. Rock, it looks like Kubert did it. When he did the **Brave and the Bold**, and he did the Creeper, it looked like a Ditko Creeper, inked by Neal.

**Well, he's a talented guy.**
Yes, there's no doubt of that; I just wish he'd do more. When I looked at the **Superman-Muhammid Ali** book, and as much as I worship Curt Swan, the concept of Neal doing Superman is just...WOW! It's like reading a movie every day.
**Speaking of special projects, is there something you'd like to do, that you've told Marvel, and they've said, "Right John -- if we make a few extra million this year!"**
(Laughter) Yes, well actually Stan has said it in one of the bullpens, that we're going to get into making T.V. shows and movies, and that's something I'd like to get into I'd like to get in on the "guiding." I have a slight theatrical background, and I'd like to participate in directing, or something like that
**What was your theatrical background?**
I did some drama in some various schools and colleges, and I've done some local T.V. I had my own show, on channel 10, which is the cable for T.V. in Canada, on the history of comics. It really got screwed up, but it gave me a lot of practical experience. It was just enough to let me know that if comics did go away, I have something that I'd really like to get into.
**But as far as a special project in comics?**
As far as in comics, they're talking cross-overs as a regular thing for DC and Marvel. One of the things they muttered at the time was Captain America and Batman, and if that goes to anyone else but me, I'll want to know why.
**There was that one-sided cross-over in the X-Men, with the Legion of Superheroes doubles.**
That was a tribute to the Legion. It was very nice, but I didn't like inheriting halfway through that story, since I was left with 87 characters running around the book.
**Wasn't there supposed to be a "tip of the hat" to the X-Men in an issue of the Legion book?**
As I understand it, the Legion was, at the time to battle a group that bore a remarkable resemblance to the X-Men It didn't pan out though...I think it was Stan who squashed it. And I can see why, and I totally agree. If we're going to do that, we should do a **Superman - Spider-Man** type book.
**What other cross-overs would you like to see?**
Well, I'm particularly looking forward to the next one, which is another **Superman - Spider-Man** book, which is being done by John Buscema. Just to see Buscema's Superman, inked by Sinnott Beyond that, if there was some way I could do it, there are a number of books I'd like to see, and like to do. Len Wein just offered me Wonder Woman, and that's a book I've always wanted to do. But as I told Paul Levitz, when he asked me what it would take to get me over to DC, I said, "You get the **X-Men**, and I'll come over!" When DC publishes the **X-Men**, I'll work exclusively for DC, but not until.
**I suppose you wouldn't want to see the X-Men done by anyone else but yourself.**
I've been flattered by people who have said they can't think of anyone else doing it. I guess I've made it my book, though I'm kinda stepping on Dave Cockrum, which I wouldn't do for the world I've done 22 issues, counting **Giant-Size X-Men #2**, and he did 15 issues. On my fifteenth issue, we changed the corner symbol for Byrne heads instead of Cockrum heads, so that was my way of saying, "From this point on folks, it's my Book!"
**Is there anything else you'd like to say to your fans who'll be reading this interview?**
Ah. .gee...what should I say?
**Keep buying?**
Keep buying! (Laughter) That's what we're doing it for When I get one letter from a fan saying, "thanks for the last issue." It's worth more to me than the $800 dollar check I get Shooter will now start paying me in letters (Laughter)
**Well, okay then, thanks for the interview.**

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# SKETCHBOOK

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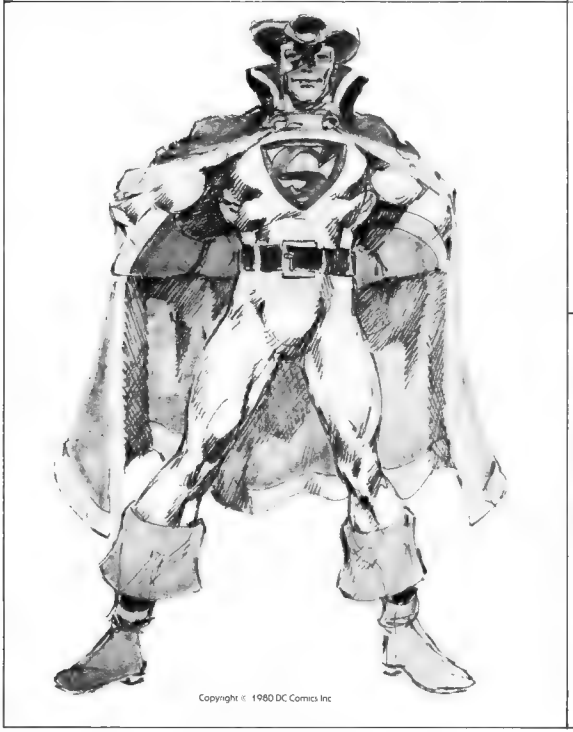
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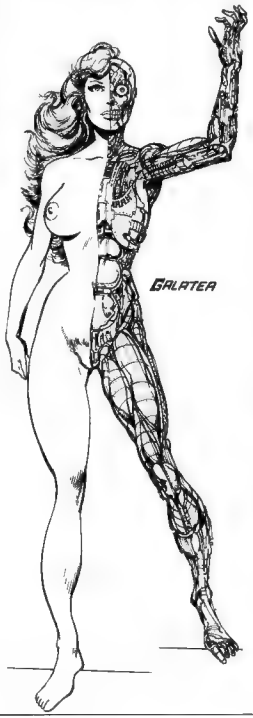
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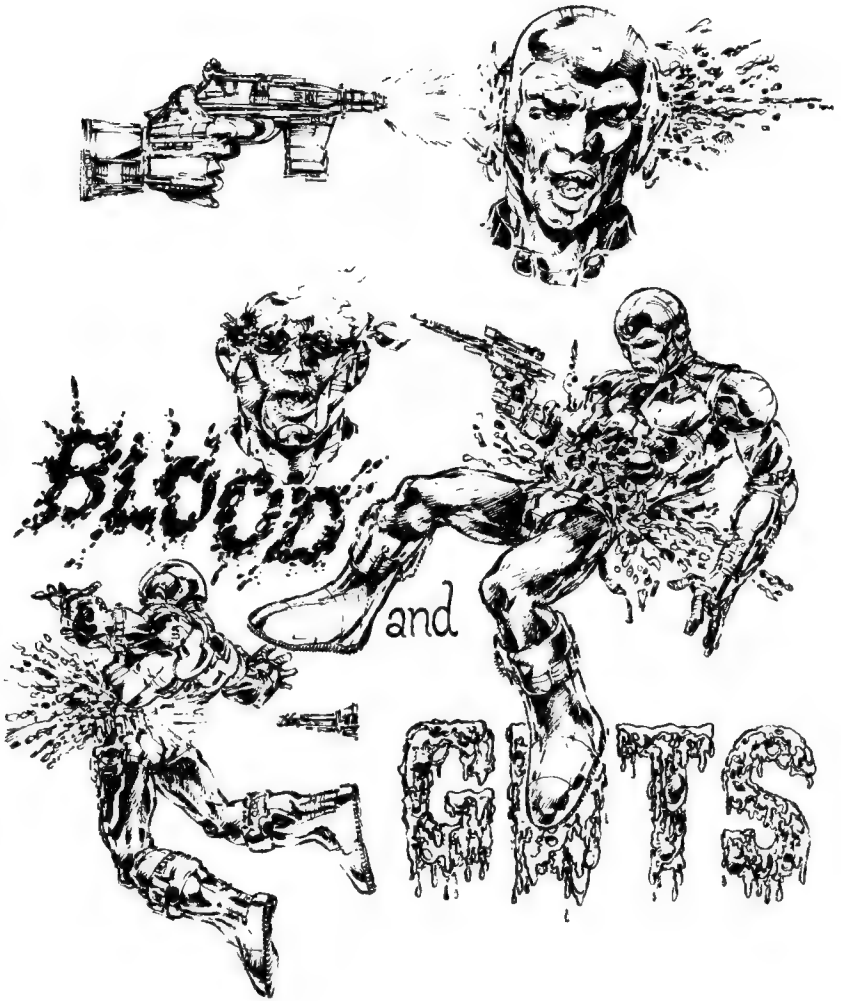
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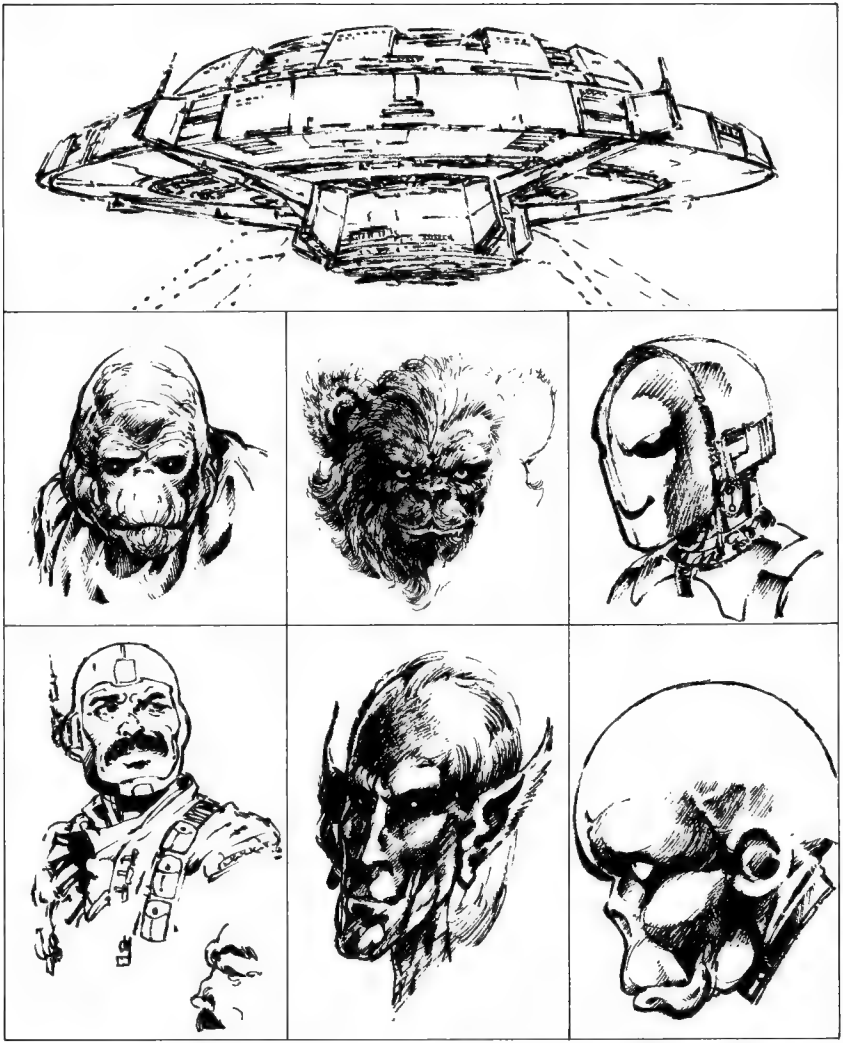

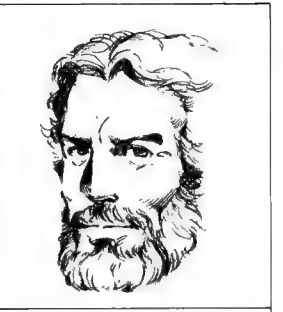

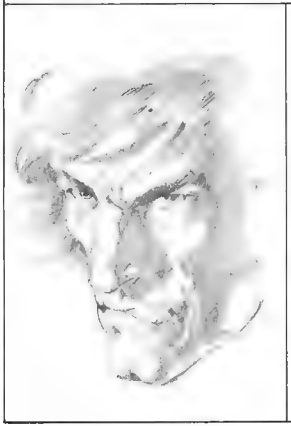

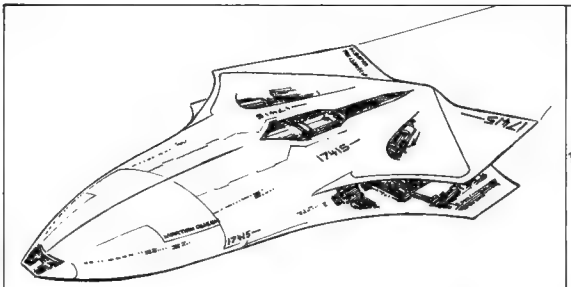

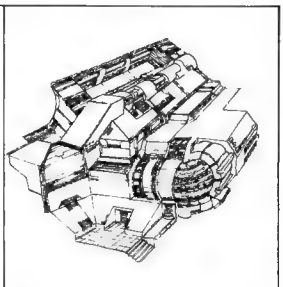

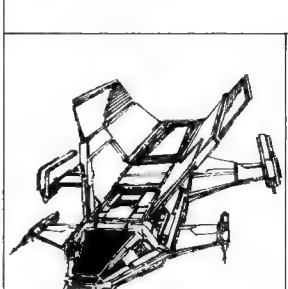

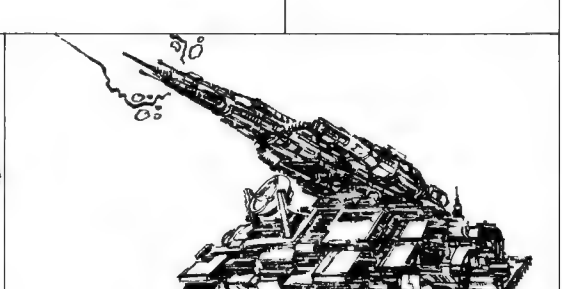

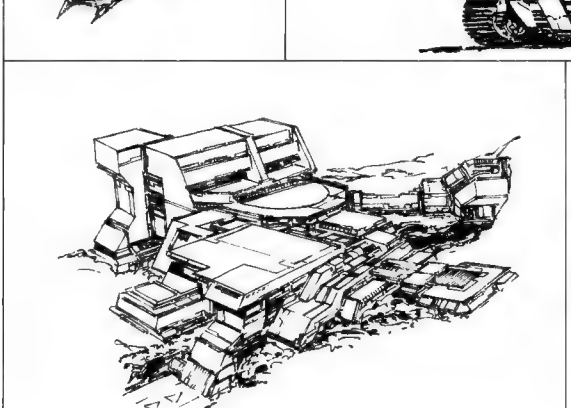

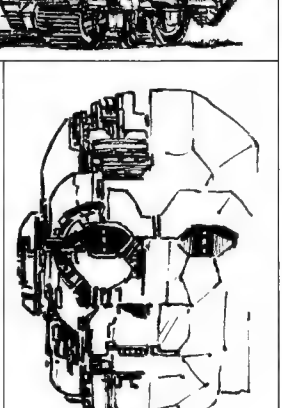

JEAN'S SISTER SARAH?
WOLVERINE
MISTY KNIGHT

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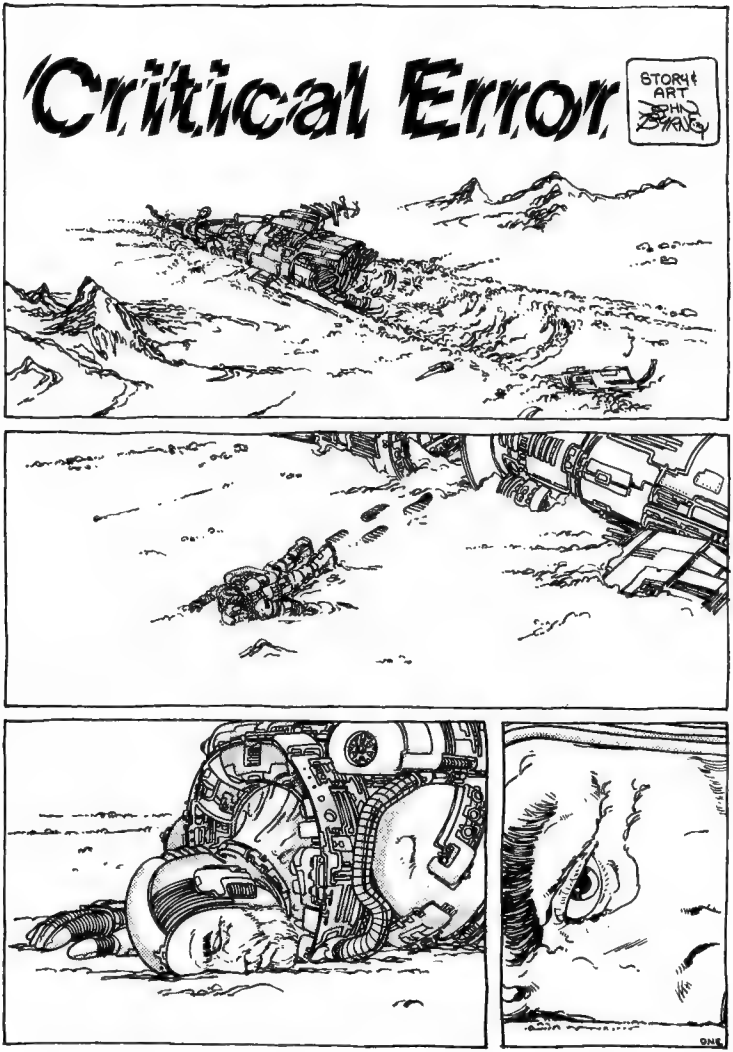
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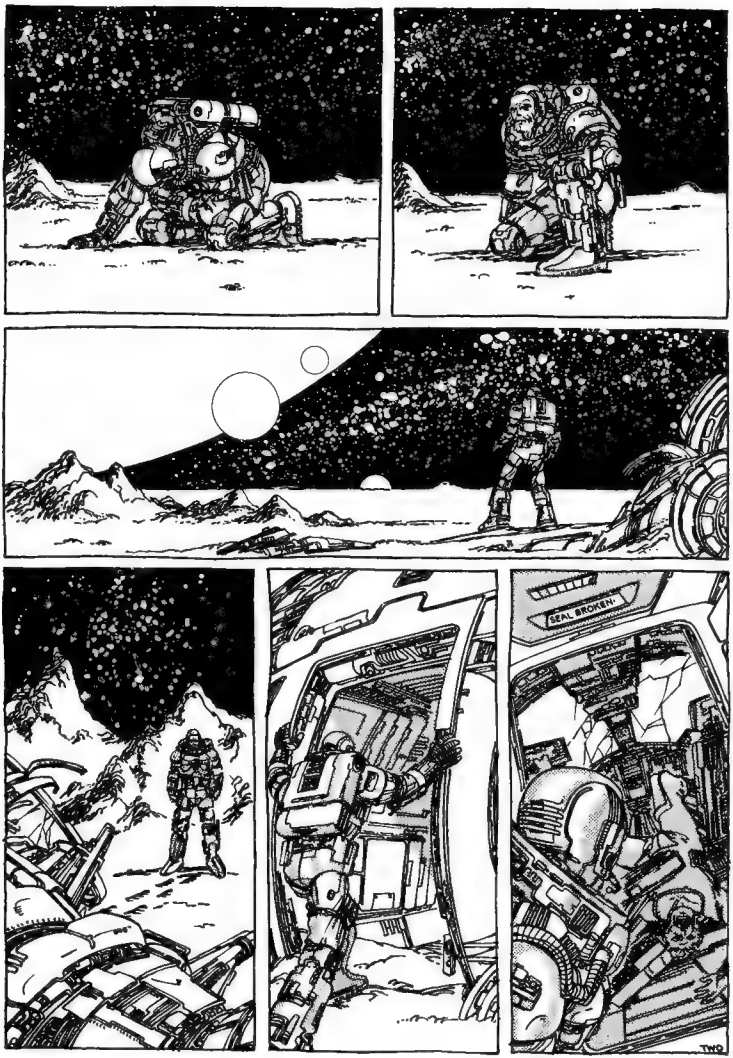
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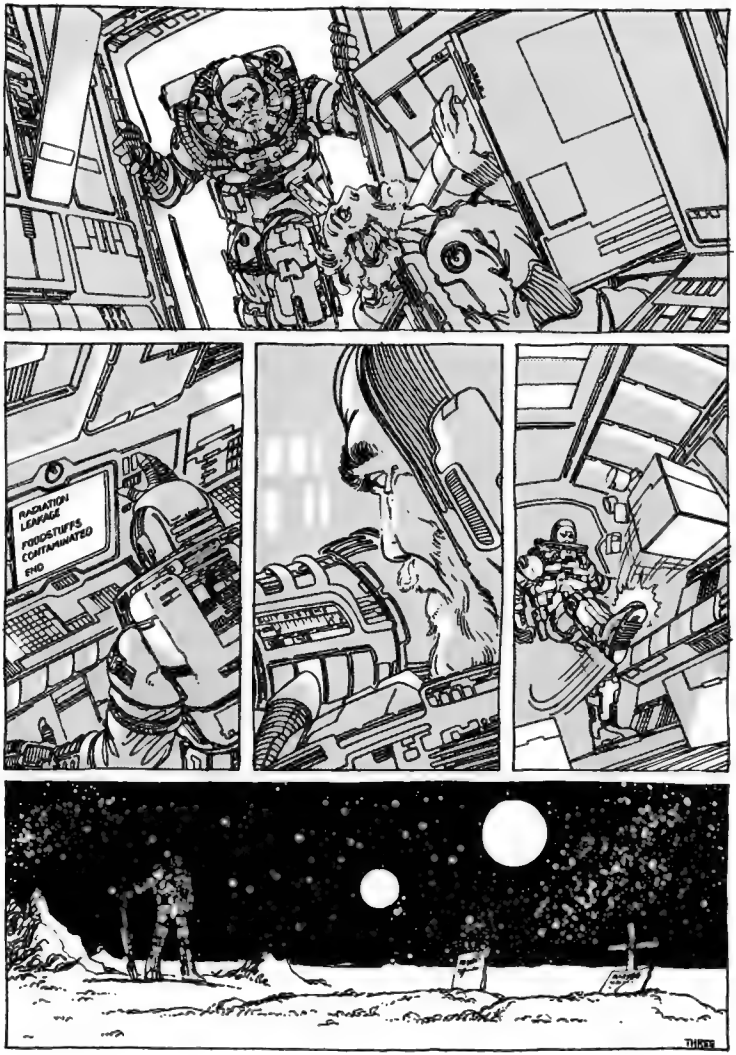
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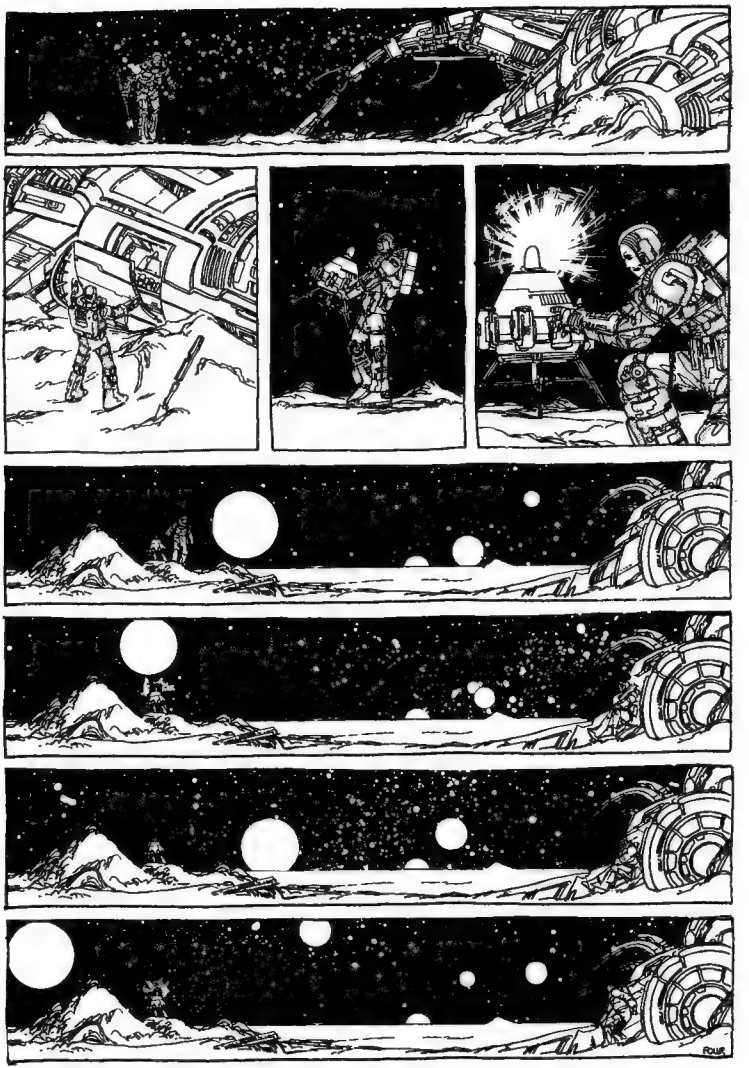
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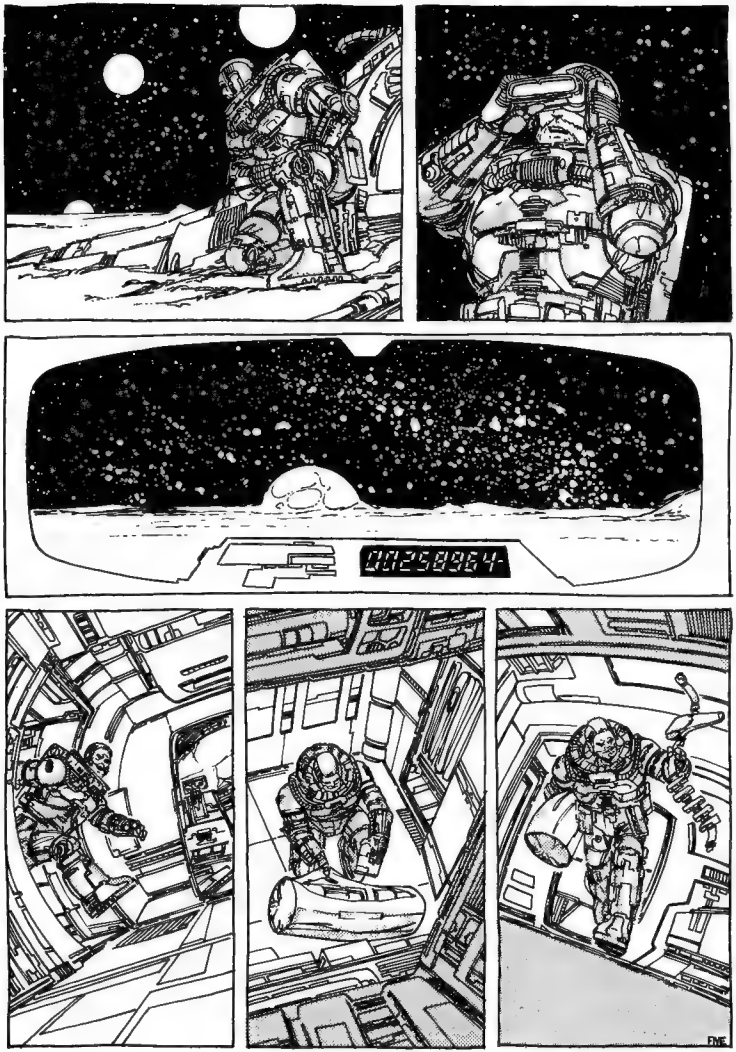
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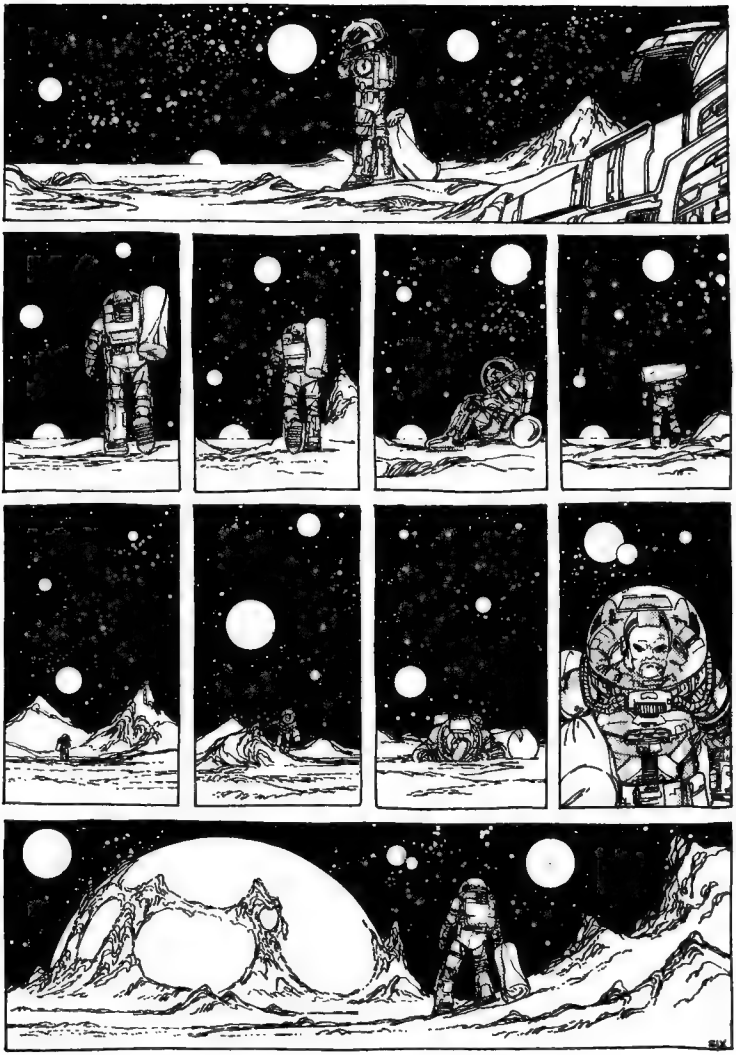

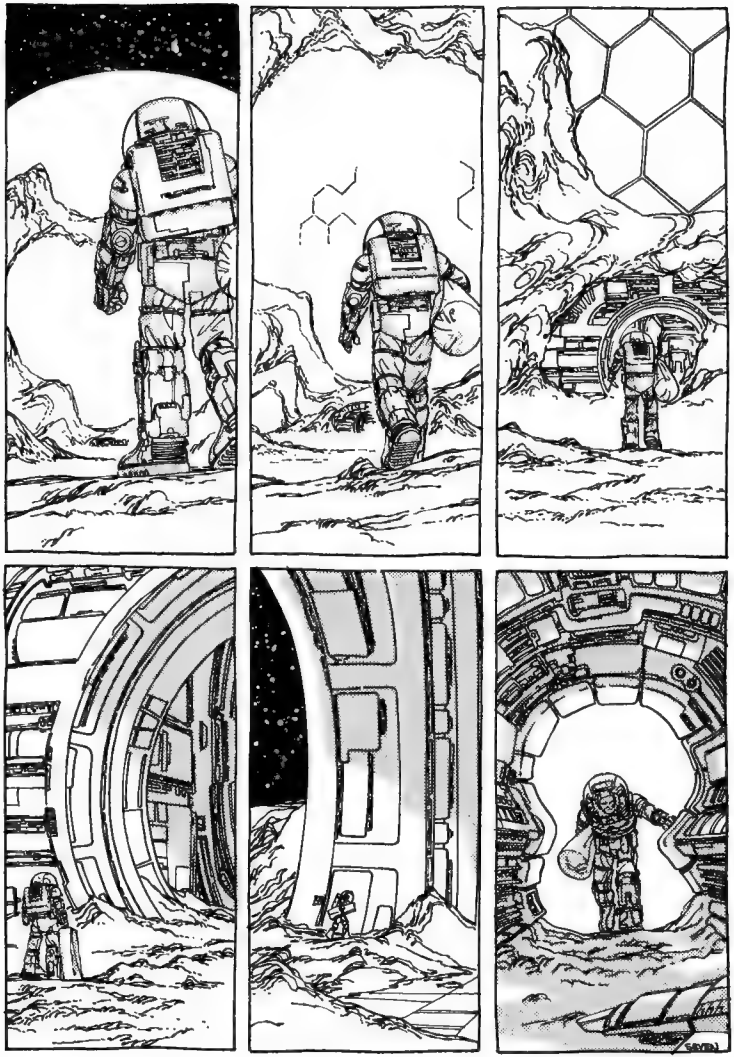

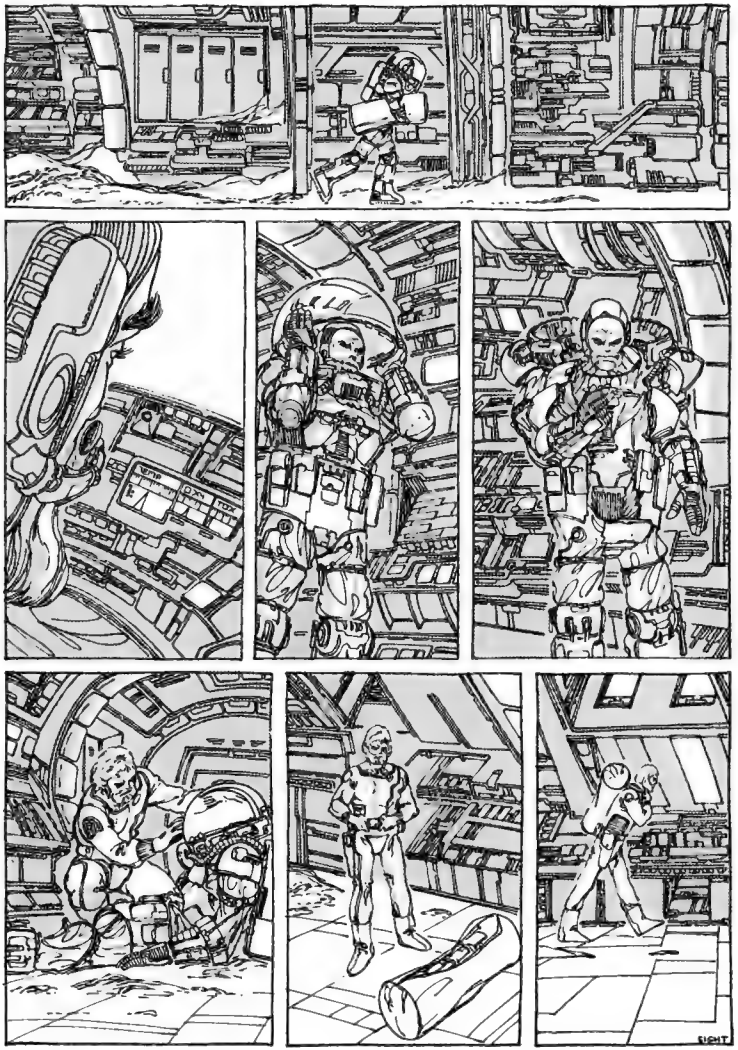
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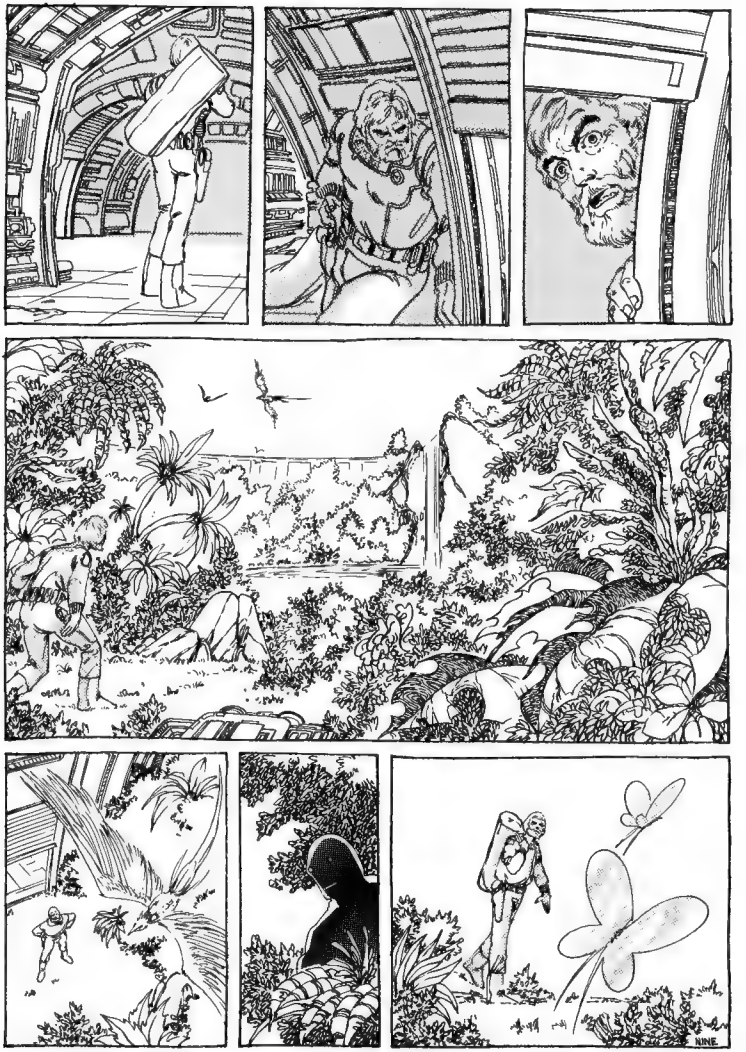
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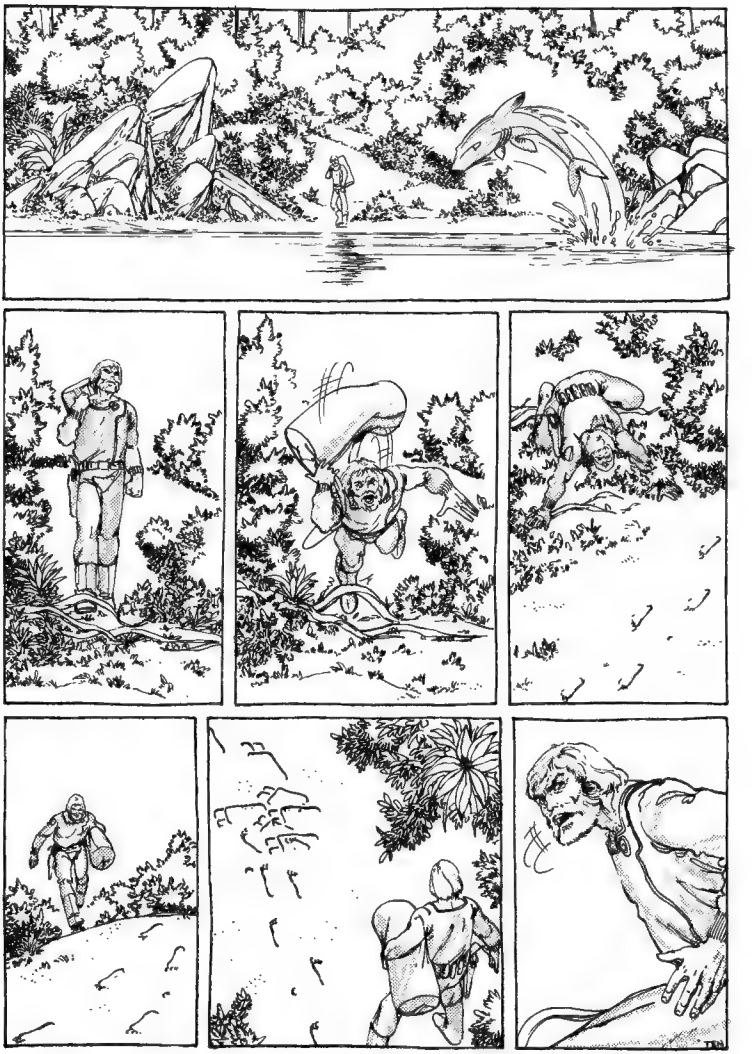

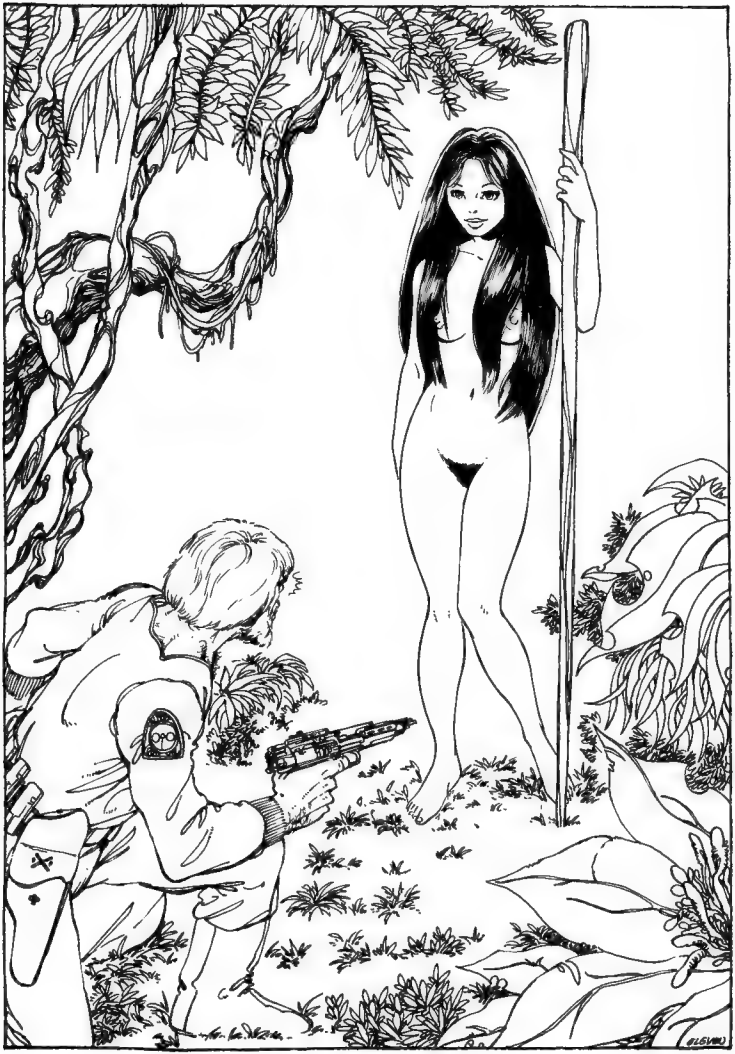

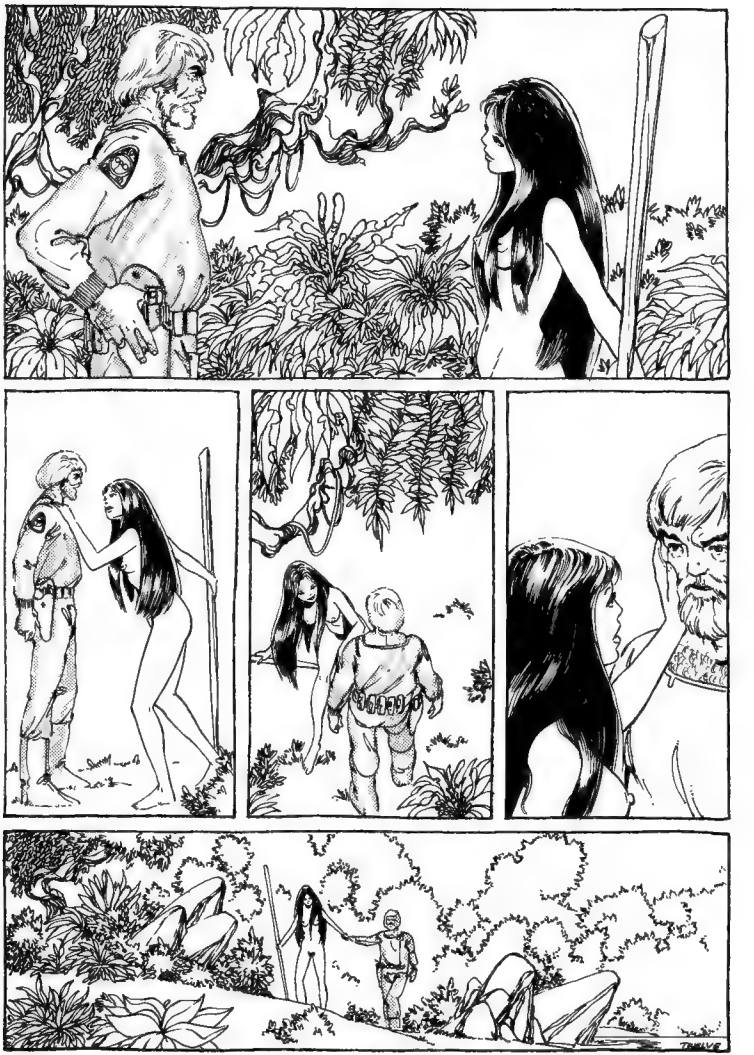

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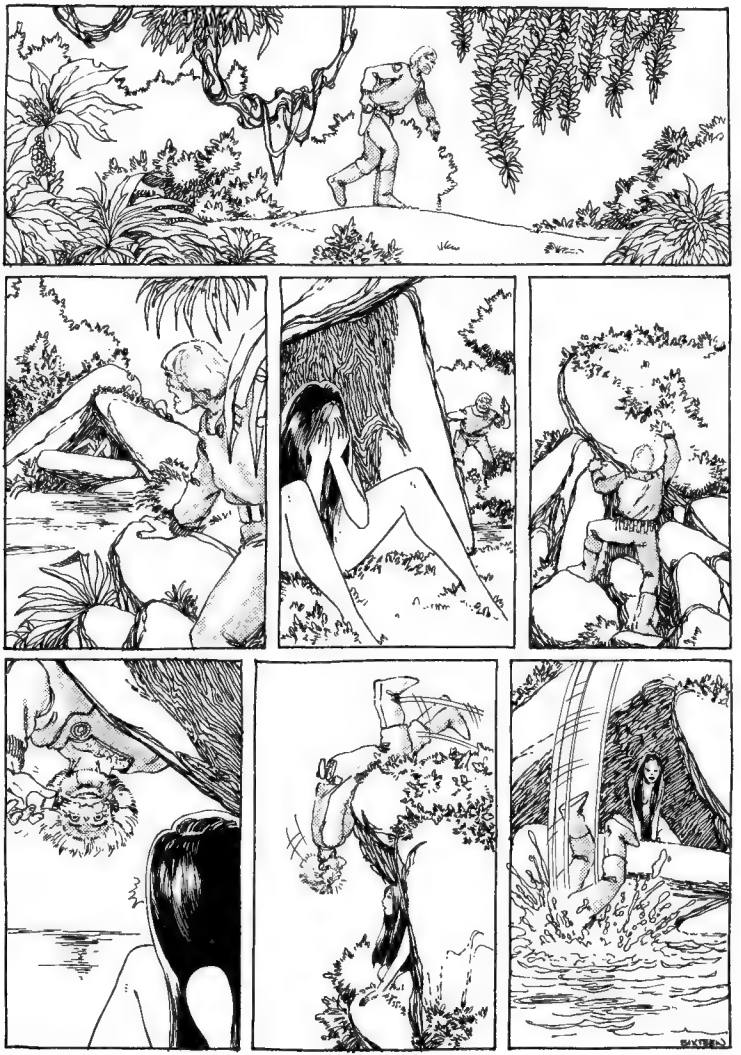

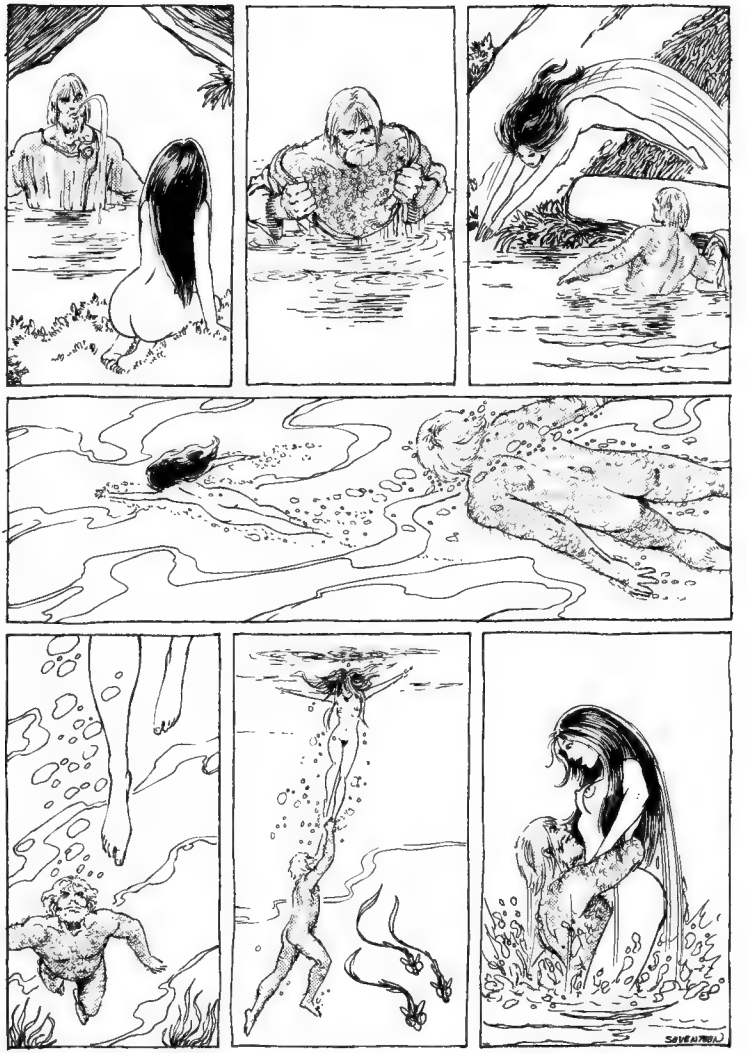

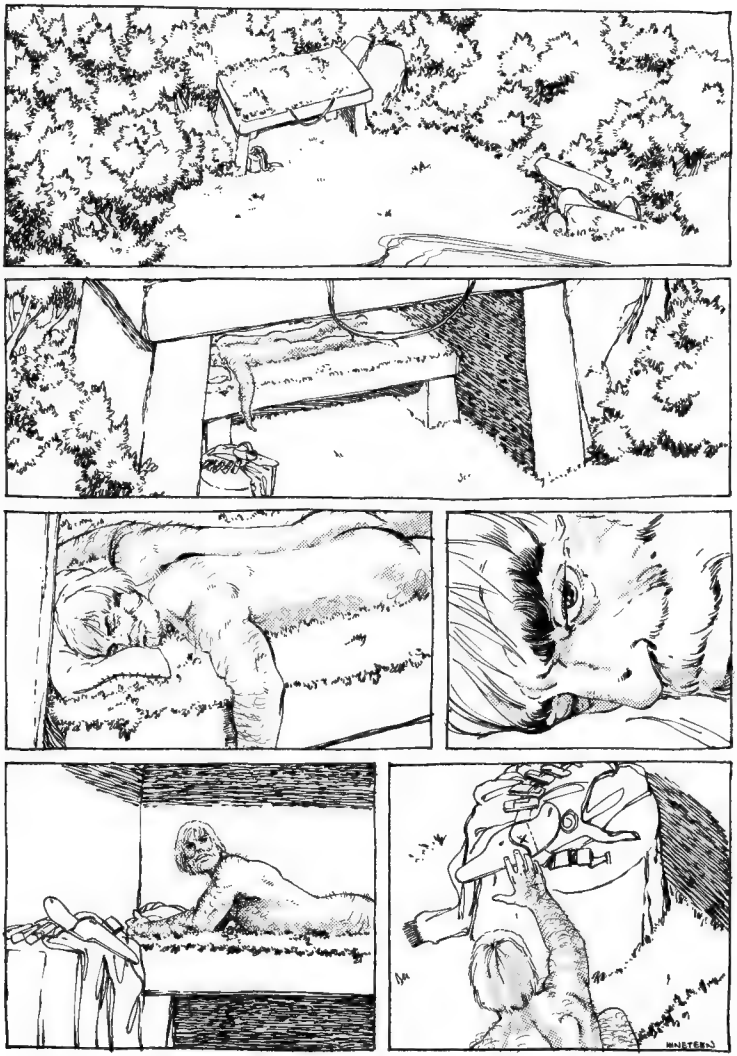
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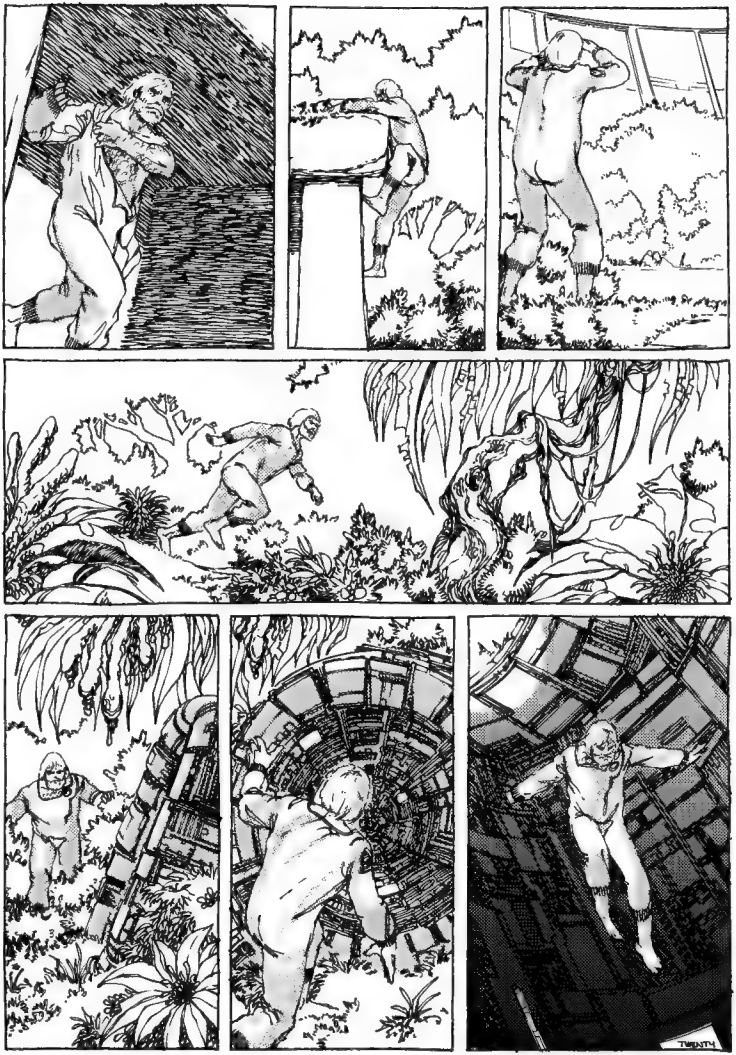
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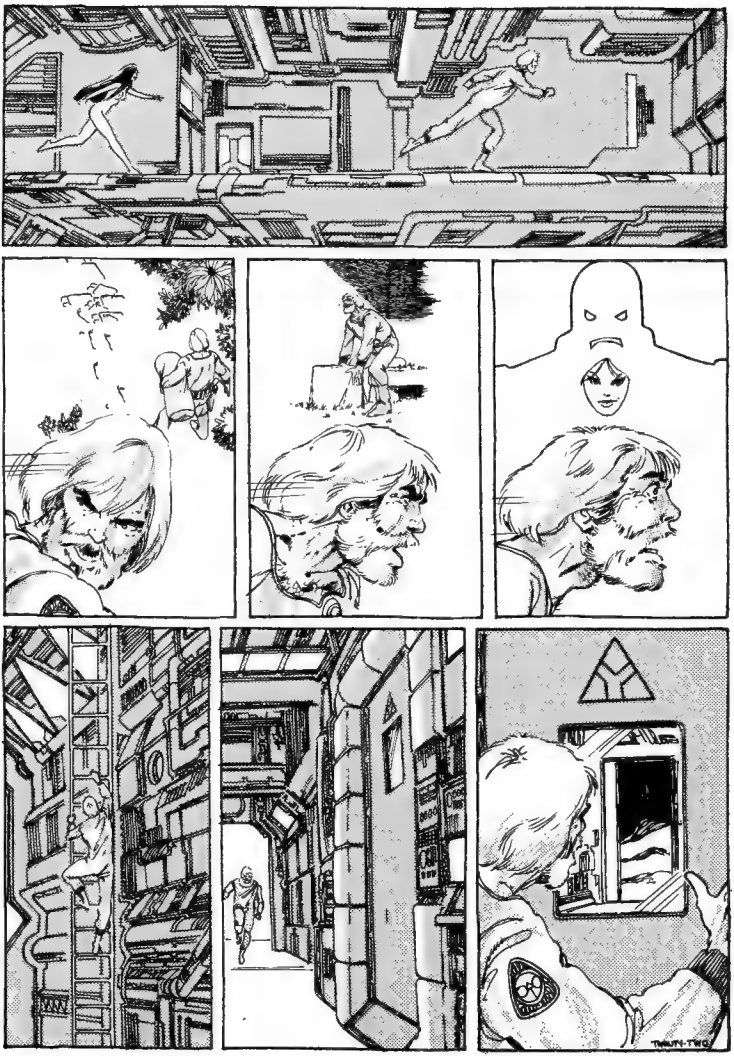
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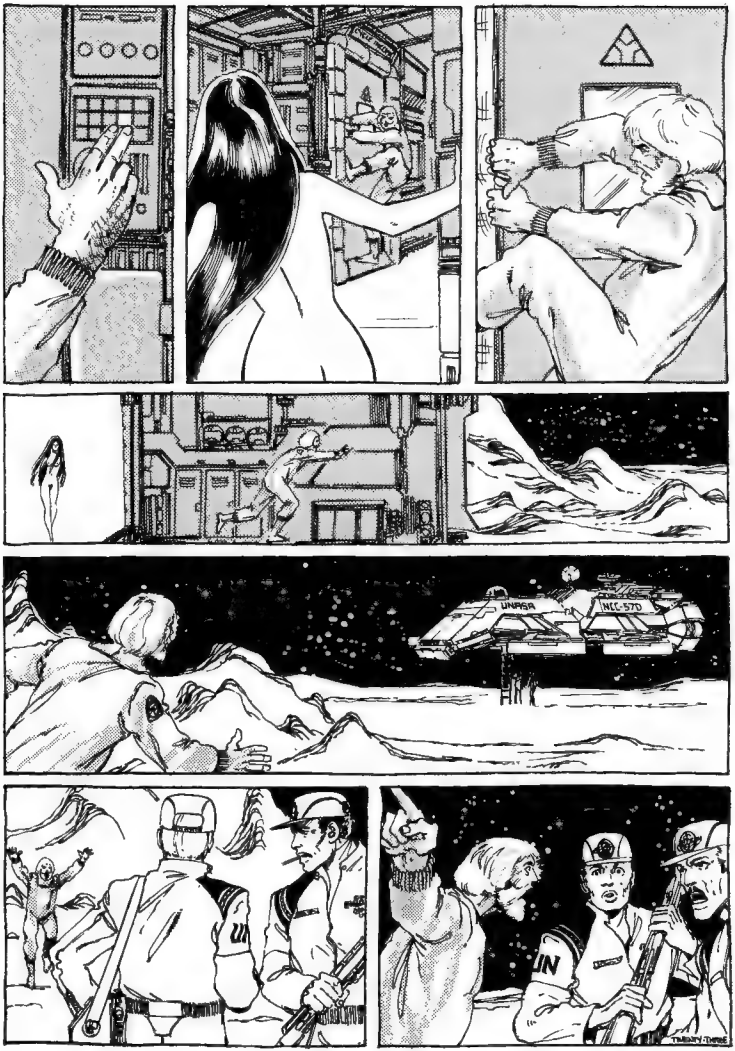
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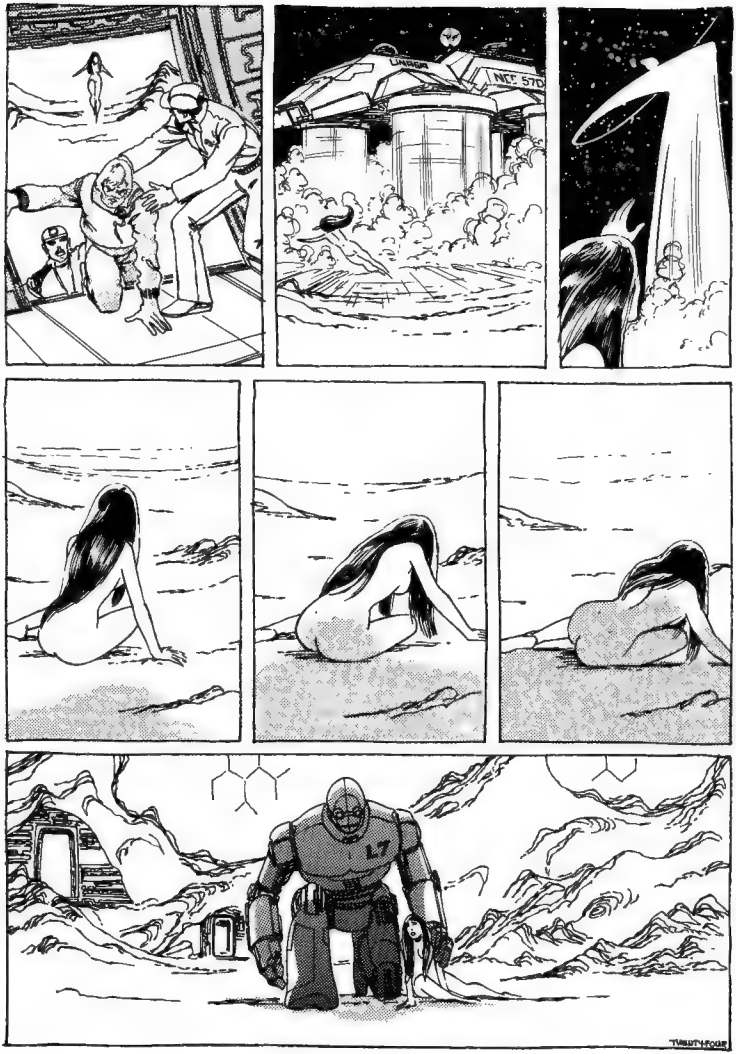
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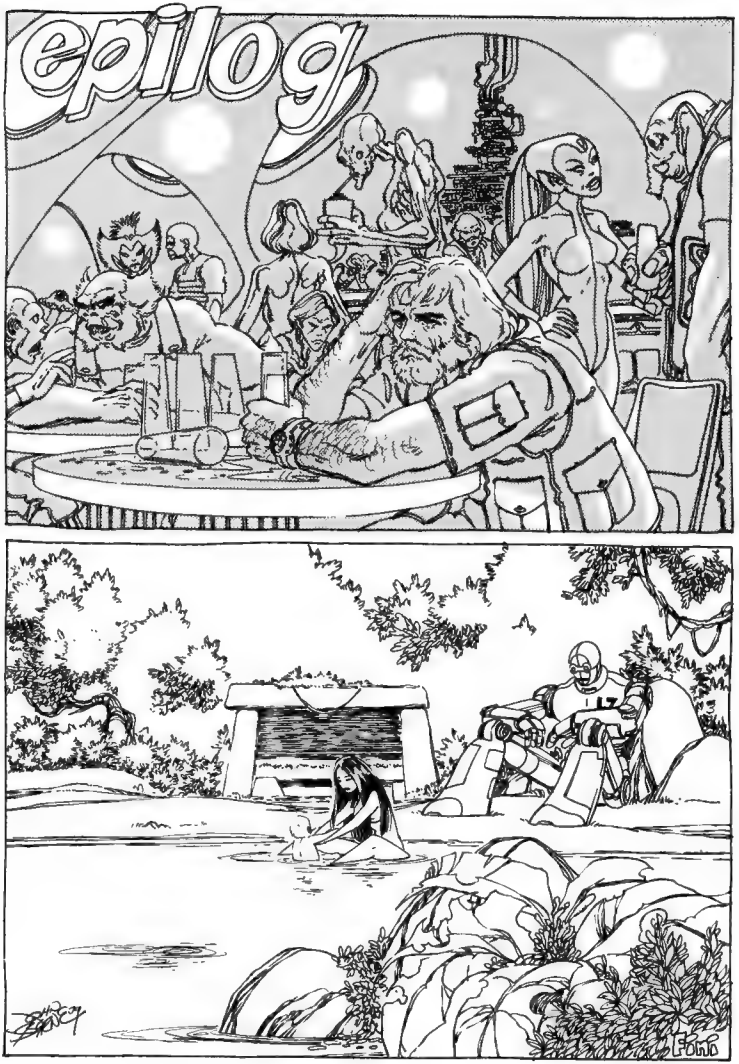
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# CHECKLIST By Roger Stern

NOTE:
(B) = breakdowns
(I) = inks
(P) = pencils
(W) = writes

## MARVEL

**AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL**
- #12 Cover: pencils & inks
- #13 The Arms of Doctor Octopus (P) w/ Terry Austin

**AMAZING SPIDER-MAN**
- #189 Mayhem by Moonlight: (B) w/ Jim Mooney, cover: (P) w/ Bob McLeod
- #190 In Search of the Man-Wolf! (B) w/ Jim Mooney

**AVENGERS**
- #164 To Fall by Treachery! (P) w/ Pablo Marcos
- #165 Hammer of Vengeance! (P) w/ Pablo Marcos
- #166 Day of the Godslayer! (B) w/ Pablo Marcos
- #181 On the Matter of Heroes! (B) w/ Gene Day
- #182 Honor Thy Father (B) w/ Klaus Janson
- #183 The Redoubtable Return of Crusher Creel! (B) w/ Klaus Janson
- #184 Death on the Hudson! (B) w/ Bob Wiacek, Allen Milgrom, Josef Rubinstein, Dan Green and Terry Austin
- #185 The Yesterday Quest! (P) w/ Dan Green
- #186 Nights of Wundagore! (P) w/ Dan Green, cover: (P) w/ Terry Austin
- #187 The Call of the Mountain Thing! (P) w/ Dan Green, Cover: (P) w/ Terry Austin
- #189 Wings and Arrows! (P) w/ Dan Green, Cover: (P) w/ Dan Green
- #190 Heart of Stone! (P) w/ Dan Green, Cover: (P) w/ Dan Green
- #191 Back to the Stone Age! (B) w/ Dan Green

**CAPTAIN AMERICA**
- #223 Cover: (P) w/ Ricardo Villamonte
- #238 Cover: (P) w/ Allen Milgrom
- #239 Cover: (P) w/ Terry Austin
- #247 By The Dawn's Early Light! (Co-plotter) (P) w/ Josef Rubinstein Cover: (P) w/ Josef Rubinstein

**CHAMPIONS**
- #11 The Shadow from the Stars (P) w/ Bob Layton
- #12 Did Someone Say ..the Stranger? (P) w/ Bob Layton
- #13 The Doom That Went On Forever! (P) w/ Bob Layton
- #14 The Creature Called...Swarm! (P) w/ Mike Esposito
- #17 The Sentinels Hunt Again! (I) W/ George Tuska

**DAREDEVIL**
- #138 Where is Karen Page? (P) w/ Jim Mooney

**DEVIL DINOSAUR**
- #9 Cover: (I) over Jack Kirby

**FANTASTIC FOUR**
- #209 Trapped in the Sargasso of Space! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott
- #210 In Search of Galactus! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott
- #211 If This Be Terrax! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott, Cover: (P) w/ Joe Sinnott
- #212 Battle of the Titans! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott
- #213 In Final Battle! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott, Cover: (P) w/ Joe Sinnott
- #214 And Then There Was One! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott Cover: (P) w/ Joe Sinnott
- #215 Again, The Bomburst! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott,
- #216 Where There Be Gods! (P) w/ Pablo Marcos
- #217 Masquerade! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott
- #218 When A Spider-Man Comes Calling! (B) w/ Joe Sinnott

**GHOST RIDER**

#20 Two Against Death! (P) w/ Don Perlin

**GIANT-SIZE DRACULA**

#5 Dark Asylum (P) w/ Rudy Nebres

**HULK ANNUAL**

#7 The Evil That Is Cast...(Co-plotter) (P) w/ Bob Layton, Cover: (P) w/ Bob Layton

#8 Sasquatch! (W) w/ Roger Stern

**IRON FIST**

#1 Duel of Iron! (P) w/ Al McWilliams

#2 Valley of the Damned! (P) w/ Frank Chiaramonte

#3 The City's Not For Burning! (P) w/ Frank Chiaramonte

#4 Holocaust! (P) w/ Frank Chiaramonte

#5 When Slays the Scimitar! (P) w/ Frank Chiaramonte

#6 Death Match! (P) w/ Frank Chiaramonte

#7 Iron Fist Must Die! (P) w/ Frank Chiaramonte

#8 Like Tigers in the Night! (P) w/ Dan Adkins, Cover: (P) w/ Dan Adkins

#9 The Dragon Dies at Dawn! (P) w/ Frank Chiaramonte

#10 Kung Fu Killer! (P) w/ Dan Adkins

#11 A Fine Day's Dying! (P) w/ Dan Adkins

#12 Assault on Avengers' Mansion! (P) w/ Dan Adkins

#13 Target: Iron Fist! (P) w/ Dan Adkins

#14 Snowfire (P) w/ Dan Green

#15 Enter, The X-Men (P) w/ Dan Green

**IRON MAN**

#109 Cover: (P) w/ Terry Austin

#118 At the Mercy of my Friends! (B) w/ Bob Layton

**JUNGLE ACTION**

#23 Cover: (P) w/ Dan Adkins

**MARVEL CHILLERS**

#2 Of Magic and Madness! (John penciled the splash page, inked by Frank Giacoia)

#6 Soul Catcher (P) w/ Frank Springer

**MARVEL PREMIERE**

#25 Morning of the Mindstorm! (P) w/ Al McWilliams

#47 To Steal an Ant-Man! (B) w/ Bob Layton

#48 The Price of a Heart! (B) w/ Bob Layton

**MARVEL PREVIEW**

#11 Star-Lord! (P) w/ Terry Austin, plus the article "Our Alien Heritage or The Central-Casting Syndrome"

**MARVEL TEAM-UP**

#53 Nightmare in New Mexico! (P) w/ Frank Giacoia

#54 Spider in the Middle! (P) w/ Mike Esposito

#55 Spider, Spider on the Moon! (P) w/ Dave Hunt

#59 Some Say Spidey Will Die by Fire...Some Say by Ice! (P) w/ Dave Hunt

#60 A Matter of Love...and Death! (P) w/ Dave Hunt

#61 Not All Thy Powers Can Save Thee! (P) w/ Dave Hunt

#62 All This and the QE2 (P) w/ Dave Hunt

#63 Night of the Dragon (P) w/ Dave Hunt

#64 If Death Be My Destiny...(P) w/ Dave Hunt

#65 Introducing, Captain Britain (P) w/ Dave Hunt

#66 Murderworld (P) w/ Dave Hunt, Cover: (P) w/ Frank Giacoia

#67 Tigra Tigra, Burning Bright! (P) w/ Dave Hunt (page 10 inked by John), Cover (P) w/ Frank Giacoia

#68 The Measure of a Man! (P) w/ Bob Wiacek, Cover: (P) w/ Josef Rubinstein

#69 Night of the Living God! (P) w/ Ricardo Villamonte

#70 Whom Gods Destroy! (P) w/ Tony DeZuniga, Cover: (P) w/ Tom Palmer

#72 Cover: (P) w/ Bob Layton

#75 The Smoke of That Great Burning! (P) w/ Al Gordon

#76 Cover: (P) w/ Terry Austin

#79 Sword of the She-Devil (Co-plotter) (P) w/ Terry Austin, Cover: (P) w/ Terry Austin

**MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE**

#43 The Day the World Winds Down (P/B) w/Sam Grainger, John Tartaglione, & Bruce Patterson, Cover. (P) w/Walter Simonson
#50 Remembrance of Things Past! (W) & (B) w/Joe Sinnott
#53 The Inner War! (B) w/Joe Sinnott, Cover: (P) w/Joe Sinnott
#54 Blood and Bionics (B) w/Joe Sinnott
#55 Giants in the Earth (B) w/Joe Sinnott
#56 Cover· (P) w/Terry Austin

**POWER MAN**

#48 Fist of Iron -- Heart of Stone! (P) w/Dan Green (Page one inked by Dave Cockrum)
#49 Seagate is a Lonely Place to Die! (P) w/Dan Green
#50 Freedon! (B) w/Dan Green

**SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN**

#17 Cover (P) w/Josef Rubinstein

**STAR WARS**

#13 Cover: (P) w/Terry Austin

**SUPER-VILLAIN TEAM-UP**

#14 Cover. (P) w/Terry Austin

**X-MEN**

#108 Armageddon Now! (P) w/Terry Austin
#109 Home Are the Heroes! (P) w/Terry Austin
#111 Mindgames! (P) w/Terry Austin
#112 Magneto Triumphant! (P) w/Terry Austin
#113 Showdown! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin, Cover: (P) w/Bob Layton
#114 Desolation (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin, Cover: (P) w/Terry Austin
#115 Visions of Death! (Co-plotters) (P) w/Terry Austin, Cover; (P) w/Terry Austin)
#116 To Save the Savage Land (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin, Cover: (P) w/Terry Austin
#117 Psi War! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#118 The Submergence of Japan! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Ricardo Villamonte
#119 'Twas the Night Before Christmas.. (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#120 Wanted: Wolverine! Dead or Alive! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#121 Shoot-out at the Stampede! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#122 Cry for the Children! (Co-plotter) (B) w/Terry Austin
#123 "Listen -- Stop Me if You've Heard It -- But This One Will Kill You!" (Co-plotter) (B) w/Terry Austin
#124 He Only Laughs When I Hurt! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#125 There's Something Awful on Muir Island! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#126 How Sharper Than a Serpent's Tooth...(Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#127 The Quality of Hatred! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin, Cover: (P) w/Terry Austin
#128 The Action of the Tiger! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#129 God Spare the Child...(Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin, Cover. (P) w/Terry Austin
#130 Dazzler (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
#131 Run For Your Life! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
Cover: (P) w/Terry Austin
#132 And Hellfire Is Their Name! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
Cover: (P) w/Terry Austin
#133 Wolverine: Alone! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
Cover: (P) w/Terry Austin
#134 Too Late, The Heroes! (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
Cover· (P) w/Terry Austin
#135 Dark Phoenix (Co-plotter) (P) w/Terry Austin
Cover: (P) w/Terry Austin

## SKYWALD

**Nightmare**

#20 The Castle (P) w/Duffy Vohland

## CHARLTON

**DOOMSDAY PLUS ONE** -- all have covers by John

#1 Doomsday Minus Two (pencils & inks & lettering)
#2 A Faceless Foe (pencils & inks & lettering)
#3 The Peacekeeper (pencils & inks & lettering)
#4 The Hidden Empire (pencils & inks & lettering) (though credited to Joe Gill, story was heavily re-written by John)
#5 Rule of Fear (P) w/ Duffy Vohland & Bruce Patterson
#6 All the Beautiful People (penciled by Doug Beavan, inked and lettered by John. Like ISSUE #4, this story was heavily re-written by John)

(A seventh issue -- There Will Be Time -- was written and drawn by John, but never published by Charlton. It eventually saw print in the last two issues of Bob Layton's CHARLTON BULLSEYE )

**E-MAN**

#6 Rog-2000...That Was No Lady (pencils & inks & lettering)
#7 Rog-2000...Withering Heights (pencils & inks & lettering)
#9 Rog-2000...The Wish (pencils & inks & lettering)
#10 Rog-2000 Vs the Sog (pencils & inks & lettering)

**EMERGENCY**

#1 Hot Cargo (pencils & inks & lettering...backgrounds by Vic Bosson)

**SPACE: 1999** -- all have covers by John

#3 Bring Them Back Alive (pencils & inks & lettering)
#4 Demon Star (pencils & inks & lettering)
#5 Gods of the Planet Olympus (pencils & inks & lettering)
#6 Flotsam/Survival (written, draw & lettered by John)

**THE MANY GHOSTS OF DR. GRAVES**

#54 Cover

**WHEELIE & THE CHOPPER BUNCH**

#2 and #3 -- Both issues had multiple stories & covers drawn by John.

## JOHN HAS ALSO HAD WORK PUBLISHED IN:

Charlton Bullseye
Charlton Portofolio
Chronicle
C.P.L
Eclipse
Epoch
Fans of Central Jersey
F.O.O.M.
Heroes, Inc.
Quest
the Collector
The Comics Journal
The Comic Reader
The Monster Times

## EARLIEST KNOWN WORK

A.C.A. Comics #1, Featuring the Death's-Head Knight (written, drawn, and lettered by John)
**The Emery Weal**...12 installments in the Adventures of Gay Guy, a satirical comic strip.

# AFTERWORD By Chris Claremont

Before I begin, a minor **caveat:** what follows are memories, and, being memories -- ever subject to human failings (not to mention an author's natural desire to re-write, thereby -- one hopes -- making things sound **far** better than they actually were) -- they are more likely than not to be rude, scurrilous, libelous, venal, defamatory, inaccurate, distorted, amusing, entertaining, and, occasinally, true. The reader is warned. Proceed at your own risk.

According to Byrne, he and I first met -- a very, very long time ago, oh best-beloved -- during my tenure as Marv Wolfman's and, later Tony Isabella's Assistant Editor on Marvel's black-and-white magazine line (You remember the black-and-white line, don't you? We were the people responsible for **Monsters of the Movies, Planet of the Apes, Tales of the Zombie, Deadly Hands of Kung Fu** -- to name but a few of our now late, lamented, stalwart story-books). He says he walked up to my desk, and we chatted briefly. Such as the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Trouble is, I don't remember any of that.

Not surprising -- after a week in the Bullpen, you're lucky if you still remember your name.

**My** first recollection of John was at one of Phil Seuling's JulyCon Industry-Pro cocktail parties (and, no, it wasn't that way at all) -- Phil's way of saying thanks to all the people in the industry that was making his days both exciting and profitable. Then, as now, Marvel was on the prowl for new artists -- all the ones we had at the time having burned out trying to keep Doug Moench busy. Anyway, there I was, standing in some hotel lounge, sipping a watered-down Coca-Cola and trying hard to enjoy myself, when I was introduced to this guy who looked a lot like me. A fraction taller, a fraction wider, a fraction less hair, a fraction more face -- aside from that, though, we had a lot in common (For example, we're both expatriate Limeys.)

This, I was told, was John Byrne, an artist from Canada. He said hi; I said hi. Our conversation continued along these scintillating lines until John hauled out his latest work. It was a 34 page **Fantastic Four** story, done totally on spec -- that is, with no guarantees of acceptance by Marvel and, of course, of payment. That day, I began the first in a seemingly unending series of "oohs" and "aahs" and "far out's" that seem to pop out of my mouth every time I see John's art. Suffice to say, I thought the book was real neat. I suggested John show the pages to Len Wein, then writing the FF. I introduced them, Len liked the pages, and said he'd consider using the story.

A year passed. I think.

Len never used John's story. He got talked out of it by others, less enchanted with John's work. I was now working for Len as Associate Editor, Len having taken over from Roy Thomas as Marvel's editor-in-chief. At the time, I'd also just taken over the **Iron Fist** strip, which seemed to be going nowhere fast. After a promising start, it had turned into one of those hard-luck series which can never hold the same creative team for two issues running. Every couple or three issues, it got a new writer, a new penciller, and each person seemed to have his own view of how to handle the book; it was a mish-mosh. Well, I took over -- and things didn't get any better. No matter what we did, the book got later and later on the schedule, and the quality of the art was nowhere near what we wanted it to be. The decision was made to find a new penciller. Unfortunately, no one was available.

I had a brainstorm -- one for which I will be forever thankful. I suggested John Byrne.

The general reaction around the office was, "sure, what the hell, what have we got to lose, the book can't get any worse." I didn't care, I'd seen the work John was doing over at Charlton on **Rog-2000** and **Doomsday Plus One**, and I liked it. I looked forward to seeing what he could do. I wasn't disappointed.

The first three stories John and I did together were off full-scripts -- where I break down the book panel by panel, describing the action and giving the dialogue. But, as I'm essentially lazy, that process was driving me up the wall; so, with **Iron Fist #3**, I decided to give John a plot -- wherin I simply describe the action of the book, letting John break it down and pace it himself. In a full-script, the writer does most of the work of actually **telling** the story; off a plot -- depending, of course, on how loose or tight that plot is -- that responsibility falls to the penciller. A good story-teller is worth far more than his weight in gold in this industry; most writers worth their craft will prefer a story-teller to an "artist" any day, because all the flashy layouts in the world won't make up for a book that's poorly told.

In that regard, John is pretty damn good. And he's getting better all the time.

But back in **IF#3**, he was just stretching his wings. I wasn't as pleased with it as I'd been with the previous issue; this one looked rushed, the art far too open. But, I told myself, this is only his first issue off a plot; don't get hysterical -- an all too common occurence in this industry -- wait and see how he does on the next issue. So, I waited — and the moment I saw **IF#4**, I knew I'd hit the mother lode. It was real nice -- well-told, exciting and powerful. Writing it was a breeze.

The months passed, and **Iron Fist** got better and better -- John's pencils graced by some of the finest inkers in the business. Along the way, he did some **Team-Up**'s with Bill Mantlo, and then the **Champions**. I picked up **Team-Up** as a regular assignment and started agitating to have John on the book as penciller; with my third issue, I got my wish and we started a pretty respectable one-year run. On the other hand, **Iron Fist** was cancelled.

Then, in the fall of 1976, I got married. John and I also re-created **Starlord.** Fifty-two pages of visually finest-kind space opera. I plotted the book on my honeymoon -- at a Science Fiction Writers Conference in Dublin -- and when the pages started rolling in, I decided it was time well spent. I told John I wanted to get the book started with a bang -- the scene I had in mind was a crowd of refugee children being herded into a shuttle by slavers; in the background, the world is burning, from one end of the horizon to the other. John gave me that, and more. If you've seen **Marvel Preview #11**, you know what I'm talking about; if you haven't, you don't know what you missed -- so go to a back-issue comic store and buy a copy of the fershlugginer book and find out.

In a fit of genius, Editor John Warner decided to get Terry Austin to ink the story. I thought the pencils were impressive; the finished pages took my breath away. The concensus -- among those of us in the office at the time -- was that this story was the finest black-and-white product, the best looking magazine, Marvel had published since the Roy Thomas/Barry Smith "**Red Nails**" epic in **Savage Tales**. The readers seemed to agree; the book sold. And sold. And sold.

Which brings me, at last, to **X-Men**. There's nothing I can say about it, really. In many ways, I think it's the finest comic Marvel puts out. If it had paper and printing of comparable quality to the art, it would...the mind boggles at the thought.

John took over the book with #108, in the middle of the climax of a galaxies-spanning epic that Dave Cockrum and I had begun over two years before. That final story -- "Armageddon, Now!" -- was complicated, complex, crowded with a Cecil B. DeMille - sized cast, in short a new-penciller's nightmare. Worse, John had a frighteningly tough act to follow in Dave. Worse still, the plot I wrote for that story would have filled an Annual, easily.

So, John fit it into 17 pages, and gave me everything I wanted -- even room to write copy.

The rest, as they say, is history.

I was talking to Roger Stern the other day, and peering at his "John Bryne Checklist" -- both of us noting, with not a little surprise, how many books bore the legend, Claremont, script/Byrne, pencils. There are close to fifty in the list -- 16 issues of **Iron Fist**, 15 or so in **Team-Up**, two dozen and more of the **X-Men**. I've done more work with John than with any other penciller, and he's worked more with me than any other writer. We've known each other five-odd years, and in that time, gotten to know each other far more than we realised. When we have plotting sessions, sometimes I'll come up with an idea -- only to hear John say that he'd been thinking along almost exactly the same lines. Or vice versa. He knows when I'm being gratuitous, and I when he's getting carried away. We work well together. It may sound arrogant, but I have yet to see a pencil job John has done for someone other than me -- outside of the '78 **Hulk Annual** -- that has seemed as visually interesting as **X-Men**, or **Iron Fist**. (The reverse is also true, that I do my best work with John; we seem to bring that out in each other.) And I confess to a snippet of jealousy when I see him working with other writers.

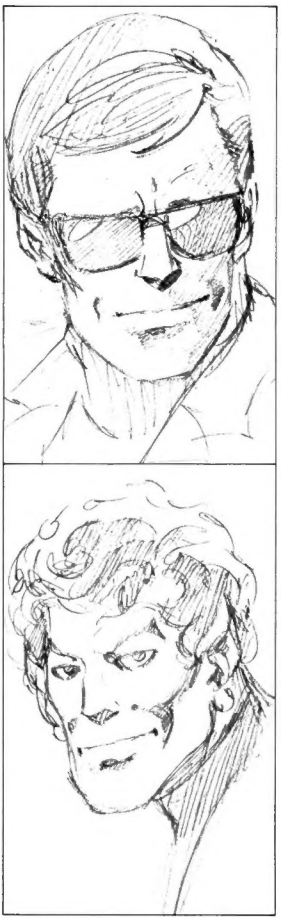
I suppose the bottom line, when it comes to speaking of John and his talent, is that he gets better. I was looking at the work of artists who'd started working for Marvel at roughly the same time as John, comparing their work five years ago to their work today, and comparing John's as well. There's no comparison, really. John has outstripped them all by so much it's ridiculous. There used to be a "joke" around the office that Byrne could only draw one face for men, one face for women, and that his people all looked like Japonese TV cartoon characters -- like Astro-Boy. In a sense, that was true; five years ago, John had a very limited visual, characterizational repetoire. But with each year -- with each **issue** -- he improved his work. He firmed the figures up, then went to work on the men faces, and finally on the women. In the last few issues of **X-Men**, there are faces that are eloquent beyond description, registering an emotional power that few other artists in this business can match.

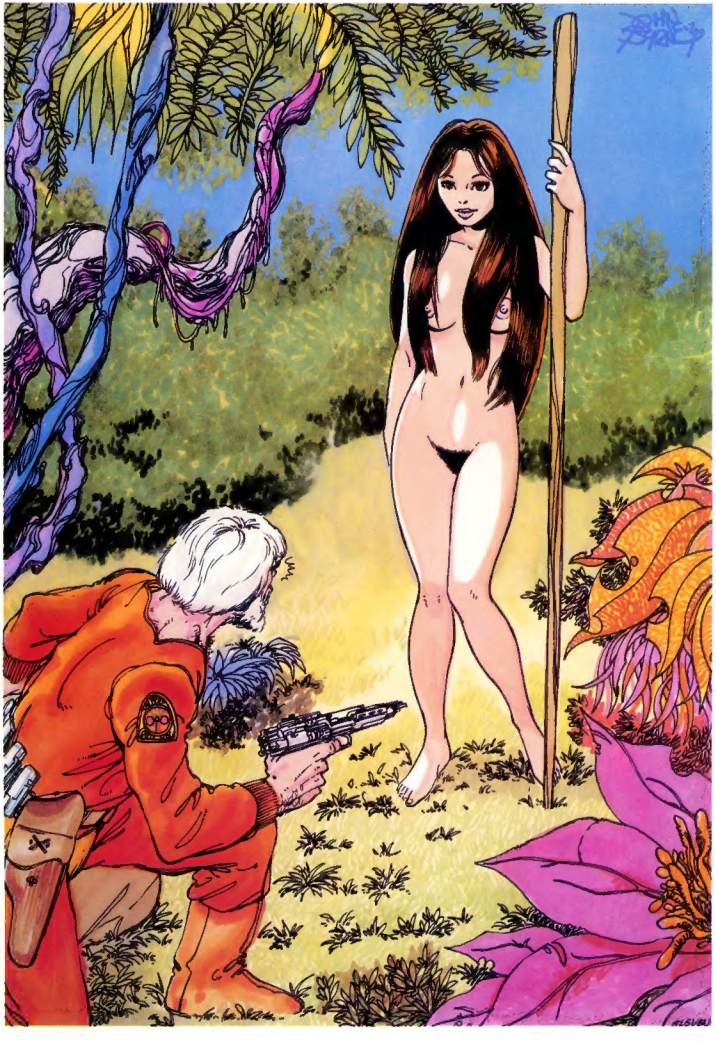
But no matter how good an issue is, the one following it is invariably better. That was so for **Iron Fist**, for **Team-Up** -- and, today, for the **X-Men**.

A couple of years ago, when the usual thundering horde of editorial staff and freelancers charged out of the Marvel offices and over to Original Joe's on 59th Street for a Friday night dinner, I proudly showed off my latest batch of Byrne pencils to another good friend of mine, Berni Wrightson. He looked at them, and said that Byrne was one of the best artists to hit comic books in a long time, possibly the best young artist then in the industry.

That held true, then.

That holds true now.





In the short time that he has been working in professional comics, John Byrne has attained an ever-growing audience that believes as he does: given the attention and intelligence, comics have the potential for truly great things.

Issue after issue, no matter which book he is working on, the story is stronger, the characters are more three-dimensional, and the artwork is the finest that can be found in comics today.

**The Art of John Byrne features:** Words of wit and wisdom by Roger Stern, Terry Austin, and Chris Claremont.
An in-depth interview, discussing John's work, including a synopsis of "What If Magneto Had Formed The X-Men?"•
A sketchbook section that showcases over 40 illustrations•
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